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1840

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

AN

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE
SECOND CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, IN PROVIDENCE,

NOVEMBER 7, 1839.

By WILLIAM HAGUE,
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

PROVIDENCE:
B. CRANSTON AND COMPANY.
BOSTON: GOULD, KENDALL AND LINCOLN.
1839.

At a meeting of the Committee appointed by the First Baptist Church and the Charitable Baptist Society, of the City of Providence, to make arrangements for celebrating the completion of the second century since the establishment of said Church and Society, held November 11, 1839,

It was voted unanimously, That the thanks of this Committee be returned to the Rev. William Hague, for his historical discourse delivered at the celebration on Thursday last, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for the press.

Voted, That the Chairman and Secretary be requested to communicate the above vote to Rev. Mr. William Hague.

A true copy:

F. WAYLAND, *Sec'ry.*

PROVIDENCE, Nov. 12, 1839.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR:

The undersigned, by the direction of the Committee, have the honor to communicate to you the above votes; and they are happy to assure you, that they are

With great respect,

Dear sir,

Your ob't serv'ts,

NICHOLAS BROWN,

F. WAYLAND.

DISCOURSE.

It is mentioned by the father of history, at the commencement of his immortal work, that he was prompted to write by a desire to preserve past events from oblivion, and to perpetuate the just renown which belonged to men of departed generations.* Not unmindful of these motives, still higher ones animate us in meeting here to-day to commemorate the scenes and actors of a former century. We too would wish like the Grecian sage to rescue the past from being forgotten, to give honor to whom honor is due, but most of all, to contemplate afresh those great principles which our fathers cherished with a love stronger than death, to bring our tribute of praise to the altar of God who enabled them to establish on these shores the religion and the freedom for which they suffered, and hath given

* Herodotus, Clio. §1.

us reason to exclaim at this day, "the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, we have a goodly heritage."

Two hundred years have now passed, since was founded in the colony which had become known as the asylum of oppressed consciences, this Church, the first of the Baptist name which was planted on the continent of America. Although that event occurred in a small community, in the midst of a savage wilderness, yet it was not shrouded in complete obscurity.* Its founder was among the lights of his age, the friend of Cromwell and of Milton,† and like his companions, an exile on account of his faith. It was the grief and wonder of the Puritans among whom he first ministered, that a man so learned and so eloquent, so disinterested and so pious, could not submit himself to the laws of their church establishment, but claimed for man as man of every nation and of every creed, the same liberty of conscience which he demanded for himself. Not understanding as he did the nature of the christian dispensation, nor the full meaning of the truth that the weapons of christianity are not carnal but spiritual, not carrying out in all its length the maxim of Chillingworth,

* Winthrop's Journal, p. 174.

† Knowles's Memoir, p. 25, 264.

that "the bible alone is the religion of Protestants," nor confiding in the power of merely moral means to promote the triumphs of the church, they expressed at once the height of his offence, their dislike of his sentiments, and their apology for persecution, when they said that "his principles tended to anabaptistry."*

In this age and in this commonwealth, it is not easy for one adequately to conceive of the feelings of abhorrence with which the rulers of the Church and the State, both in Old and New England, and throughout all Christendom, looked upon the rise of what they thought to be so portentous an evil. Sometimes the more clear sighted among them spoke of it in a manner which indicated a dread of its moral power, while others treated it as a weak vagary of unquiet minds, destined soon to expire without leaving scarcely a trace of its existence. Baxter said, that at one time when England had little experience of its tendency and consequents, people used to speak of it as a temporary conceit

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* The expression of the ruling elder of Plymouth was, that he would run the same course of rigid separation and anabaptistry, which Mr. Smyth, at Amsterdam, had done; and it is said by Morton and Hubbard, that having removed to Salem, "in one year's time he filled that place with principles of rigid separation and tending to anabaptistry."—*Backus*, I. p. 56.

of some heated spirits.* For the most part those who looked attentively at its nature and operation, were inspired with a strange dread of its influence, and a feeling of relentless hostility toward it. Three hundred years are just completed since the edict of Henry VIII, which proclaimed a general pardon for almost all heretics except the Anabaptists.† That very year, thirtyone of them were martyred at Delft in Holland, the men being beheaded and the women drowned.‡ It was certainly a remarkable year, for three men and one woman (called "Donatists, new dipt,") bore faggots at St. Paul's cross, and one man and woman were burnt at Smithfield.§ This spirit of persecution is not so much to be wondered at as to be deplored. In a country where ecclesiastical and civil power were united, where every native was supposed to be born into the church as well as the state, where baptism had become both the seal of salvation and the sign of citizenship, where the parish register furnished to the ruler the statistics of population and to the individual the proof of his civil birthright, who can tell with what ter-

* Sylvester's Baxter, part I. 41.

† Acts and Monuments, II. 358.

‡ Dutch Martyr, lib. II. p. 123, quoted by Crosby.

§ Stocs chron. in Fuller, B. 5. p. 229. § 11.

rors the very name of anabaptistry was invested! As its chief and essential element, it proclaimed that the christian dispensation recognises no bond of union with the visible church, except a voluntary profession of christian faith. With what a decisive meaning did it strike at the established order of things in Europe: how directly was it seen to aim its blow at every legal bond which united the church and the state! Here and there, in one and another age, as these principles sprung up in some congenial soil or some obscure recess, the foot of civil power was put forth to crush them. At different times and in different countries they had appeared and passed away, had flourished for a while in peaceful obscurity, then being brought out to the light, received their chief attestations from the voice of expiring martyrs. No wonder that to many anabaptistry would seem as the chimera of some erratic mind, destined only for a short period to ruffle the surface of society and then for ever disappear. Yet wherever the spirit of religious inquiry has been much awakened, wherever the word of God unbound hath moved the hearts of the people, there anabaptistry hath appeared; appeared too amongst the sincere, the humble, the devout men of the earth. Over their minds the principle reigned with power, and amidst

storms of adversity they prophesied that its day would come. Thence the first planting of it on the American continent is an event of great importance, whether we consider the agitation which from age to age it has caused in Europe, or its workings in society since it found an asylum in the new world.

As the founder of this Church was the founder of the Commonwealth, a proper occasion has been embraced by this community to commemorate his worth as the first Christian legislator who proclaimed and established that principle of religious freedom, which constitutes the glory of Rhode-Island.* It is therefore the less needful now that I should narrate the events connected with his purchase of this territory of the Indians, and the organization of the civil government. Among the statesmen of the world he holds a singular pre-eminence, and comparing him with them, it is but just to say in the words of a living historian,† "He was the first in modern christendom to assert in its plenitude the doctrine of the liberty of conscience, the equality of opinions before the law, and in its defence he was the harbinger of Milton, the precursor and superior of Jeremy Taylor." From first to last

* Judge Pitman's Centennial Address, Providence, 1836.

† Bancroft's History of the United States, v. I. p. 375.

this principle has been fondly cherished throughout Rhode-Island, and has impressed its character on all her legislation. In the words of another, "In her code of laws, we read for the first time since christianity ascended the throne of the Cæsars, that conscience should be free, and men should not be punished for worshipping God as they were persuaded he required, a declaration which to the honor of Rhode-Island she has never departed from. It still shines among her laws with an argument for its support in the shape of a preamble, which has rarely been surpassed in power of thought or felicity of expression."*

It is a just matter of wonder that in that age, and from a monarch like Charles II, a charter embodying a principle so dreaded as a source of anarchy, could have been in any way obtained. It is doubtless true that his desire to tolerate the Catholics in England, disposed him favorably towards a proposition from a Puritan colonist, which would secure to Catholics the undisturbed enjoyment of their religion in this distant part of his dominion. In such a combination of events, however, Roger Williams could not but recognise the interposition of the Supreme Providence which rules the Universe, and declared the con-

* Judge Story's Centennial Address, Salem, 1828, p. 57.

victions of his mind on this point when he said "all the world may see by his Majesty's declaration and engagements before his return, and his declarations and Parliament speeches since, and many suitable actings, how the Father of Spirits hath mightily impressed his royal spirit, though the bishops much disturbed him, with deep inclination of favor and gentleness to different consciences and apprehensions as to the invisible king and way of his worship. Hence he hath vouchsafed his royal promise under his hand and broad seal, that no person in this colony shall be molested or questioned for the matters of his conscience to God, so he be loyal and keep the civil peace. Our grant is crowned with the king's extraordinary favor to this colony as being a banished one, in which his Majesty declared himself *that he would experiment* whether civil government could consist with such liberty of conscience. This his Majesty's grant was startled at by his Majesty's high officers of state, who were to view it in course before the sealing, but fearing the lion's roaring, they couched against their wills in obedience to his Majesty's pleasure."* What reason have we to rejoice that on this consecrated spot we can lift up our voices today in united testimony, and declare

* Major Mason's Letter, Mass. His. Coll., Vol. 1.

that the great moral experiment which was begun here two centuries ago by an English king has been attended with success; that here without one invasion of liberty of conscience, religion has been upheld, civil order maintained, life and property secured, justice dispensed, education diffused, the peaceful arts cultivated, social concord cherished, and a general concert of action preserved among men of conflicting religious opinions not only to attain the great ends of civil government, but also to promote the progress of society. It is a glorious result to which we bear witness, one which our forefathers saw only by the eye of faith, but saw so clearly, that the blest vision thereof made their hearts strong in the day of calamity; a result which may tell loudly on the moral advancement of our race, and which we would fain proclaim as with the voice of many waters and the voice of mighty thunderings, till it reach the ear of every dweller on the face of the earth, who in the spirit of christian love is toiling to elevate downtrodden and degraded humanity.

Without entering very minutely into the biography of Roger Williams, the knowledge of which, from various sources, is now accessible by all of us, it may be well just to glance at an outline of his life. The best accounts of him state that he was born in Wales, in 1599. From

a remark of his own, it seems probable that he became pious in his youth, for in a book written in 1673,* he says, "the truth is, from my childhood, now above three score years, the Father of lights and mercies touched my soul with a love to himself, and to his only begotten the true Lord Jesus, to his holy scriptures." He studied law under the patronage of Sir Edward Coke, but afterwards devoted himself to theology, received Episcopal orders and had the charge of a parish in England. His lot was cast in stormy times, and both his temperament and education fitted him to act some decisive part in passing scenes. Possessing an ardent love for truth and liberty, he was led by his convictions to join the Puritans, and like others of them emigrated to New-England, which had become famous abroad as the home of piety and freedom. He arrived at Nantasket in February, 1631, and on reaching Boston, and finding the church there wielding a sceptre of civil power, at once he declared himself dissatisfied with them because they had not abjured those principles on the ground of which they had been united to the established church of England. Then, he broached the great doctrine, that civil governments, being constituted only for civil and

* George Fox digged out of his burrowes.

secular ends, the magistrate hath no right to interfere in the affairs of conscience. He seems at that time, to have fully matured the truth that a church established by civil law, can not be, as to its outward order, a true church of Christ; that so far as civil authority enforces religious duties, so far the church which allows it becomes a "kingdom of this world," and not the spiritual empire of which Jesus Christ is the only sovereign. Giving offence to the rulers in Boston, by avowing opinions so adverse to their ecclesiastical polity, he went to Salem, where he was well received, and chosen teacher by the church. At this the court in Boston marvelled much, and raised such an excitement against him, that in less than a year, he removed to Plymouth, where he was associated with Mr. Ralph Smith, the Pastor, as an assistant teacher. We have the testimony of Governor Bradford to the excellent character of his ministry, but his distinguishing doctrine of human liberty, which was involved in his idea of the spirituality of the christian dispensation, was the cause of an opposition to him, which disposed him in 1663 to listen favorably to a call from the church in Salem, to return to that place. Of all the churches in Massachusetts, that of Salem was most attached to the principle of independency.

and maintained it most resolutely.* The next year he was ordained their pastor, on which account the court in Boston manifested strong hostility to them, refusing even to hold intercourse with them touching matters of civil justice, until they retraced their steps. Thrice was he called before them to answer to several accusations. One was, impugning the justice of that patent by virtue of which the colony held her lands, inasmuch as it paid no regard to the rights of the Indians. Another was, calling the established church of England antichristian.—The third was, saying that an oath ought not to be enforced on an unregenerate man, which assertion being based on the opinion that an oath is an *act of worship*, was defended by an argument remarkable for its simplicity and strength. But the worst of all was, declaring that "the magistrate ought not to punish the breach of the first table, otherwise than it did disturb the civil peace." His sentiment on that subject is thus expressed in his own words:†—"As the civil permission of all the consciences and worship of all men in things merely spiritual, is no ways inconsistent with true christianity and true civility, so, it is the duty of the magis-

* Upham's 2d Cent'y Disc. p. 41.

† Hireling Ministry, p. 36.

trate to suppress all violences to the bodies and goods of men for their souls' belief, and to provide that not one person in the land be restrained from or constrained to any worship, ministry, or maintenance, but peaceably maintained in his soul [liberty] as well as corporal freedom."*

At the General Court in 1635, two letters were produced against him, the sentiments of which he boldly defended, and the next morning his sentence of banishment was pronounced. It stands recorded in the State papers of that day, proclaims as the "head and front of his offending" his doctrine touching the authority of magistrates, and commands him to depart out of the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth within six weeks, on penalty of forcible expulsion. The very rulers who had before sought to get rid of

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* Judge Pitman well suggests, that two other charges mentioned by Winthrop were thrown in for the sake of effect. These were, that a man ought not to pray with unregenerate persons, nor to give thanks after sacrament or after meat. It is probable that what Mr. Williams uttered on these points was connected with the fact that men indiscriminately were *constrained to* these duties, and that the church forms treated all as regenerate. Certain it is that the letter which several of the nobility and gentlemen of England wrote to the rulers of Massachusetts in behalf of Mr. Williams, asserted that each party spoke well of the other, except in regard to religious liberty.

two men among them on account of their cherishing what was deemed too great an attachment to the forms of the Church of England, now banish another for defending the rights of all who were persecuted for conscience's sake.

Such was the excitement which the publication of this sentence produced in Salem, that the government considered it expedient at first to allow him to remain through the winter. But on hearing that a number of persons resorted to his house, that about twenty of them had been drawn to his opinions, and that they intended to depart together to erect a new plantation about the Narragansett Bay, the court feared the spread of his contagious doctrines from thence through all the churches of their commonwealth, and resolved to crush in the bud a plan so dangerous. Thence they sent him a peremptory order to repair forthwith to Boston to be shipped. He replied that he could not come without hazard of his life. On this a pinnace was sent with a commission to Captain Underhill, to take him by force. But their design was anticipated, and when they reached his house, they found that he had been gone three days. In the midst of winter, this venerable pilgrim, this apostle of religious liberty, went forth from his home, like the patriarch Abraham, not knowing whither he went. Yet like Abraham, he walked by faith.

He moved with a firm unfaltering step. Who can tell what perils he braved, what hardships tried his soul? Who can adequately picture the dangers which beset the path of the lonely traveller through an unexplored forest, amidst piercing cold, and drifting snows, uncertain at every step where to find firm footing, making his bed now under the covert of a rock, now in a hollow tree, and only relieved at times by the luxury of an Indian wigwam? No wonder is it that he said in his old age, he felt "the effects of those severities." But well may we wonder that his spirit was undaunted, that his bodily strength endured. Deeply must he have felt that he was made strong by the power of the mighty God of Jacob; a sentiment which he has expressed with sweet simplicity in stanzas which allude to the fact that when exiled by his brethren, the hearts of the savages were open to receive him.

"How kindly flames of nature burn
In wild humanitie—

God's providence is rich to his,
Let none distrustful be;
In wilderness in great distress,
These ravens have fed me.

Lost many a time, I've had no guide,
No house but hollow tree;
In stormy winter night, no fire,
No food, no company.

God makes a path, provides a guide,
And feeds in wilderness;
His glorious name while earth remains,
O that I may confess."*

True benevolence, though it always confers inward peace, is not always attended in this world with visible and outward reward. It was otherwise in the case of Mr. Williams. He was the first Christian Missionary to the Indians in North-America. While at Plymouth and Salem, he says, "My soul's desire was to do them good. God was pleased to give me a painful patient spirit to lodge with them in their filthy, smoky holes, to gain their tongue." Little did he think, however, while he was taking such pains to impart to them the knowledge of eternal life, that he was preparing the means of his own temporal salvation. Yet so it was. The knowledge of their language, which he thus gained, enabled him to hold intercourse with them in the wilderness, to awaken their sympathies, and to command their confidence; and after having been warned by the Plymouth government to leave Seekonk, where he "first pitched and began to build and plant," it enabled him as he sailed around yonder point, to answer the friendly cry of "*Whatcheer*,"† with which

* Key, chap. II. &c.

† A friendly greeting, which the Indians had learned from the English.

the Indians hailed him there, in words that won upon their hearts. Thus, led by a "right way to a city of habitation," his spirit was deeply touched with a sense of the interposition of God, and thence he says, in view of the counsel and advice which he received, "as to the freedom and vacancy of this place, and many other providences of the Most Holy and Only Wise, I called it Providence."*

It is not to be supposed that a man so devout as he, could reach the end of his pilgrimage, without, like the ancient patriarch, erecting an altar and calling upon the Lord. There is no reason to doubt that he immediately commenced public worship. He who had panted to preach the gospel to the Indians, who amidst his trials in Massachusetts had become almost exhausted with his ministerial labors, constantly conversing and preaching thrice a week, he certainly could not long remain on this spot, which by its very name he had solemnly consecrated, without endeavoring to promote the institutions of religion. Thence we are not surprised to learn from Winthrop, "that he was accustomed to hold meetings both on the Sabbaths and on week days."† Those who had been members of the church in

* Major Mason's Letter.

† Vol. 1, p. 283.

Salem would naturally regard him as their pastor still. It is a just remark of his biographer, that Mr. Williams may have judged it to be most conducive to the peace and welfare of his little colony, to erect at first no district church, but to gather the inhabitants into one assembly for worship until the number should have so increased, as to enable them to form separate churches, and maintain public worship conformably to their own views. If so, it was an event of extraordinary character, a thing quite unprecedented in the annals of the world, for the founder of a colony to prepare the way for the division of the people into sects, relying only on argument and pursuasion to induce a conformity with his own opinions. How strong must have been his faith in the moral power and ultimate prevalence of *truth!* How clearly must he have seen that the union which christians should desire, is not so much a formal blending of all sects into one body, as a unity of spirit, cherished in spite of speculative differences, a mutual respect for each other's moral freedom, which inspires the hearts that feel it, with an abhorrence of all unchristian or unmanly means of gaining converts to a cause.

Having reached a land where in religious things he could speak and act without restraint or fear, he began to carry out the principle he

had adopted to their legitimate results. He counted not himself to have already attained or to be already perfect, but cherished the spirit of that admirable farewell address, delivered by the excellent Robinson of Leyden to the first Puritan company which sailed for New England. "I charge you," says he, "before God and the blessed angels, to follow me no further than you have seen me follow Christ; if God shall reveal anything to you by any other instrument of his, be as ready to receive it, as you were to receive any truth by my ministry; for I am verily persuaded that he has more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word. For my part I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches who are come to a period in religion, and will go at present no further than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw; whatever part of his will our God has revealed to Calvin they will rather die than embrace it, and the Calvinists you see stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things. But take heed what you receive as truth, examine it, consider it, and compare it with other scriptures before you receive it, for it is not possible the christian world should come so lately out of such thick anti-christian darkness, and that full perfection

of knowledge should break forth at once."* In accordance with such a sentiment, Mr. Williams proceeded to study more largely the will of God. His mind was naturally clear sighted and impulsive, and doubtless ever disposed to carry a principle out to its just conclusion or else to give it up altogether. He had already obtained lucid views of the spiritual nature of the Christian dispensation, of the supremacy of Christ's word as the rule of faith and practice, of the free and voluntary character of genuine religion. It is not surprising therefore that he became dissatisfied in what was called a baptism, which resulted from no act of choice on his part, which was administered in unconscious infancy, which was defended by reasonings that tended to blend the Jewish and Christian dispensations, and which were thence at war with the spiritual constitution of the Christian church. As to the mode of it, his knowledge of the force of language would lead him to unite with the whole Greek church, when they say of the sprinkling or pouring practised in Western Europe, "it is no baptism." As to the subjects of it, he could find no warrant for applying the rite to unconscious beings in the New Testament. There was no escaping the conclusion therefore, that according to the

* Neal, vol. I. p. 490.

command of Christ it was his duty to be baptized on a profession of his faith. In his view, this could not justly be called anabaptism, or second baptism, inasmuch as he could not admit that he had ever been baptized at all, and the rite which had been applied to him in his infancy, was classed by him amongst the corruptions of Christianity.

The difficulty which immediately arose however, was the want of a proper administrator, for at that time no ordained minister could be found in America, who had been immersed on a profession of his faith. A regard for order, would naturally lead Mr. Williams and those who were with him, to wish for such a person; and if any of them had laid any stress on the prevalent idea of the necessity of a regular succession of baptized ministers from the apostles, in order to administer baptism properly, their case would be somewhat embarrassing. The same question had been discussed in London a short time before, in the year 1633, in a Baptist church which was formed by an amicable secession from a body of Independents, of which Rev. John Lathrop was the minister. Some of the members following out the same principles which Roger Williams promulgated in Massachusetts, came to the conclusion that there was no divine warrant for infant baptism. Among these was Kiffin, a

princely merchant well known in the court of Charles II., and from whom that monarch condescended to ask a loan of thirty thousand pounds; a request to which Kiffin replied that he could not command so much money just then, but at the same time presented to his Majesty one third of that sum. Kiffin left a manuscript containing an account of the formation of the new church, to which Crosby in his history of the Baptists, makes a reference.* It seems that some of these were very desirous to receive baptism in a manner the least objectionable; and though there were Baptists in England who could have administered the ordinance to them, they chose to send to the Netherlands, where there were those whose baptism was said to have descended from the Waldensian Christians. One of their

* Thomas Crosby was a Mathematical teacher in London, the early part of the last century, and a deacon of the church of which Dr. John Gill was Pastor. He was led to publish his history of the Baptists, by the following circumstance:—Having heard that Mr. Neal was preparing a history of the Puritans, he placed in the possession of that writer many valuable materials from which a just representation of the condition and progress of the Baptists might have been drawn. But on the publication of Neal's work, it appeared that little use had been made of these papers, and that to the subjects of which they treated, the partialities of that author had rendered him incapable of doing historical justice. For an illustration of Neal's failure at this point, see Dr. Price's History of Protestant Nonconformity, vol. II. p. 319.

number, therefore, Mr. Richard Blount, who understood the Dutch language, was commissioned to go for this purpose. On his return, he baptized Rev. Samuel Blacklock, and these two baptized the rest, "whose names are in the manuscript, to the number of fiftythree."*

Most of the Baptists in England however, it is said, regarded this as "needless trouble, and what proceeded from the old popish doctrine of right to administer sacraments by an uninterrupted succession, which neither the Church of Rome nor the Church of England could prove to be with them. They affirmed therefore, and practised accordingly, that after a general corruption of baptism, an unbaptized person might warrantably baptize, and so begin a reformation."†

In the year 1609, a treatise was published in Holland, by Rev. Mr. Smyth, in which, says Crosby, he defended the two following principles:—First, that "upon the supposition of the true baptism being lost for some time, through the disuse of it, it is necessary there should be two persons to unite in the administration." The second is, that "the first administrator must be a member of some church, who shall

* Crosby's History of the Baptists, vol. 1. p. 182, London edition, 1738.

† Persecution Judged and Condemned, p. 41, quoted by Crosby.

call and empower him to administer it to the other members."*

On these latter principles, Mr. Williams and his friends seem to have acted; for Mr. Holliman, who was afterwards a Deputy from the town of Warwick to the General Court, was appointed by the little community, to baptize Mr. Williams, and then he baptized the rest.† Backus thinks it probable, that he concluded that his case was similar to that proposed by Zanchius, Professor of Theology at Heidelberg, in his commentary on the fifth chapter of Ephesians. He supposes a Turk, by reading the New Testament, to become converted, and to be the means of converting his family to Christ. Not living in a christian country, nor having access to christian ministers, Zanchius desires to know whether he must necessarily live without practising the christian ordinances? He answers in the negative, saying that he may be baptized by one of his own converts, "because he is a minister of the word, extraordinarily stirred up of Christ; and so as such a minister, may, with the consent of that small church, appoint one of the communicants and provide that he be baptized by him." But it is

* Crosby, I. p. 100.

† Backus's Hist. vol. I. p. 105–6.

supposed by some, that one higher than Zanchius, even the great head of the Church himself, has anticipated such a case, and has provided for it by direct legislation; for in that part of the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, where Christ converses with his disciples, respecting the discipline of the church, he says, "where two or three are gathered together, or associated, in *my name, there am I in the midst of them.*" Those have reason for their opinion, who think that Christ intended to lay the proper basis for a true church, and in effect declares that whenever any unite by solemn covenant, in his name, to walk together in obedience to his commandments, there he will be to ratify and bless their union; and that thence they have from his word as much authority for their acts as a church, as they would have if his personal presence were revealed among them, and they were to receive a commission directly from his lips. A church thus united would be bound to take his word as their rule, to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded them; to appoint their bishops and their deacons, and to do every thing decently and in order; and would thus exemplify the great principle that *succession arises from order*, and *not order from succession.*

In regard to a case of baptism, however, like that of Mr. Williams's, it is worthy to be men-

tioned, that in every age and in every church, baptism by the hands of a layman has been deemed valid in case of necessity. Numerous authorities might be adduced to show this, but suffice it now to name Potter, Archbishop of Canterbury, who says, in the age of Tertullian, it was permitted to laymen to baptize when necessity required it; and in the time of Ambrose, it was the common opinion that laymen may baptise in cases of extreme danger, neither can any instance be produced where this practice was condemned by any council.*

Thus was formed (in March, 1639, according to Winthrop,) the first Baptist church in America. The members who first constituted it were ten in number, and their names were these:—Roger Williams, Ezekiel Holliman, William Harris, Stuckley Westcot, John Green, Richard Waterman, Thomas James, Robert Cole, Francis Westcot, and Thomas Olney.

It is quite remarkable that the work of founding this Church, devolved chiefly on a man who had been at first a clergyman of the Church of England, and was a Pædo-Baptist when he emigrated to America, instead of some one of that multitude of Baptists who were then living in England and in Holland. Although the cir-

* Potter on Church Government, p. 233–4. Phila. 1824.

cumstances in which the baptism of the first members of this Church occurred were quite extraordinary, and excited at first some question as to the validity of the rite, yet it is now generally regarded as satisfactory, according to the principles admitted by all protestant Christians. For as we have seen, according to the sentiments generally held by the Baptists themselves, it must be admitted to be valid, and in the view of Pædo-Baptists, Mr. Williams was, of course, qualified to administer Christian ordinances. Nevertheless, if it were otherwise, the question would not have so much practical importance, as some who have made but slight inquiry into the subject have been disposed to think. An impression has to some extent prevailed, that Roger Williams may be justly called the head and founder of the Baptist *denomination* of America, and also, that of what was considered in his day the *heresy* of religious liberty, he has the credit of being not only the promulgator, but the author. Historical justice requires that we give to both of these points some attention.

Touching the first, a few words will suffice. Comparatively few of the members of this Church have derived their baptism from Roger Williams, and comparatively few of the Baptists of America have sprung from this body. For more than half a century, this Church has had

ministers, whose baptism had no connexion with that of Mr. Williams. As early as 1663, a Baptist church, under the ministry of the Rev. John Miles, of whom Mather speaks respectfully,* emigrated from Swanzea, in Wales, to *Wannamoiset*, within the bounds of the Plymouth Colony, of which they received a grant, and called it Swanzea, the name which the township now bears. None but a Baptist church has ever existed there. In the words of Professor Knowles, "of the 400,000 Baptist communicants now in the United States, a small fraction only have had any connexion, either immediate or remote, with the venerable Church at Providence, though her members are numerous, and she has been honored as the mother of many ministers."

The second point just suggested, will require a more ample notice.

Roger Williams is worthy of all praise for the profound and lucid views which he took, of the nature of religious liberty, and of its being an *essential* element in the constitution of a christian church. He did not consider the belief of it necessary to salvation, but a church established by law, and enforcing its creed, he regarded in its outward constitution to be

* Ecclesiastical History of New-England, p. 27.

anti-christian. He saw that it contained an element altogether irreconcilable with the genius of christianity, and one which indicated a profound mistake as to the real character of the present dispensation. He justly judged it therefore to be a part of the grand apostasy. When a man has once a clear and strong faith like that in the doctrine of "soul-freedom," he never forsakes it. The principle incorporates itself with the essential elements of his mind, modifies his opinions of the relations of men, the nature of a church, and the end of civil government. Then, it is no longer enough for him that his creed be tolerated; he feels it to be an injury inflicted on himself, and on the cause of man, that any human power should assume the right to tolerate. He regards such an assumption in any class of men, as partaking of the nature of a conspiracy against human liberty, as raising obstructions to the exercise of such an intelligent heartfelt faith in Christ as the gospel demands, and as being directly opposed to the spirit of that moral probation, in which God has chosen to place the world under the government of Messiah. Hence Williams says, "It is the will and command of God, that since the coming of his Sonne (the Lord Jesus) a permission of the most *Paganish*, *Jewish*, Turkish or anti-christian conscience and worships be granted to *all* men, in all nations

and countries; and they are only to be fought against with that sword, which is only (in soule matters) *able* to conquer, to wit, the sword of God's Spirit, the word of God."* Again he speaks of "thousands and tens of thousands, yea the whole generation of the righteous, who since the falling away (from the first primitive christian state or worship) have and do err fundamentally concerning the true matter, constitution, gathering and governing of the church; and yet far be it from any pious breast to imagine, that they are not saved, and that their souls are not bound up in the bundle of eternal life."†

Now, whence was it, that this great assertor of human freedom obtained such clear perceptions of a principle, which was in his day so much abhorred, but which has since won such majestic triumphs, and is still going on from conquering to conquer? Why was he in the discovery of moral and political truth, so far in advance of the leading men of New England, and that too in an age, when all the subjects which pertain to man's social and religious condition were so hotly agitated? Was it that he possessed a clearer intellect or a more profound philosophy than they? No where could the

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* Introduction to the "Bloody Tenent."

† Bloody Tenent, p. 20.

materials be found, to construct the least plausible proof of such a position. A passage in one of his works will give us some clue to a proper answer to this inquiry. It relates to a man of some learning, but of more piety, in humble life, a Baptist minister, and pastor of a church in London. It was the excellent Samuel Howe, successor to John Canne, author of the marginal references to the bible. His church suffered bitter persecution from the clergy and bishops' courts, on account of their sentiments touching liberty of conscience; and when he died, a guard was placed around the parish church, to prevent his friends from giving him decent burial. Nevertheless, many followed him to the grave, which was in the highway, and a funeral address was delivered from a brewer's cart. He had followed the occupation of a shoe maker, was distinguished for great natural genius, and was the author of a small treatise, entitled "The Sufficiency of the Spirit's Teaching." His employment was hinted at in some commendatory lines prefixed to the work by a friendly hand, and in the style of the times;

What *How*? how now? hath How such learning found,
To throw Art's curious image to the ground?
Cambridge and Oxford may their glory now
Veil to a Cobbler, if they know but How.

This man died in 1641, and of him, Roger Williams says, "Amongst so many instances dead and living, to the everlasting praise of Christ Jesus, and of his Holy Spirit, breathing and blessing where he listeth, I cannot but with honorable testimony *remember* that eminent christian witness and prophet of Christ, even that despised and yet beloved Samuel Howe, who being by calling a cobbler and without human learning, (which yet in its sphere and place he honored,) who yet I say, by searching the holy scriptures grew so excellent a textuary, or scripture-learned man, that few of those high rabbis that scorn to mend or make a shoe, could aptly or readily from the holy scriptures outgo him. And however, (through the oppression upon some men's consciences even in life and death, and after death, in respect of burying, as yet unthought and remedied,) I say, however he was forced to seek a grave or bed in the highway, yet was his life and death and burial (being attended with many hundreds of God's people) honorable and (how much more at his rising again) glorious.*

If then, while in England, Roger Williams held friendly communings with men of such a

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* Hireling Ministry, None of Christ's, Lon. 1652, p. 11, 12.

spirit, who were publishing there at the hazard of reputation, and property, and life, the same principles which have since attracted the statesman's eye as he has seen them shining among the statutes of this commonwealth, we need be at no loss to conjecture whence he drew them. He learned them from men who derived them from the Bible. The fact is, that although in New-England he seemed to stand alone, there were many in Old England with whom he had common sympathies, who cherished the same sentiments, who in some instances suffered for them the loss of all things, clung to them under galling bondage, and proclaimed them amidst the fires of martyrdom.

An allusion has already been made to the fact, that before Mr. Williams left Plymouth, an apprehension was expressed by the ruling Elder there, "that he would run the same course of anabaptistry, that Mr. Smyth, of Amsterdam, had done." This man was once a minister of the Church of England, but having spent nine months in studying the controversy between that Church and the Puritans, he joined the latter, and is spoken of as a leading man among them in 1592. In 1606, he settled at Amsterdam, over the Puritan Church there, and from having begun to question the validity of infant

baptism in the Church of England, he gave it up altogether. Then, changing his views as to the nature and design of baptism, he became the head of a secession from the Puritans, and formed a Baptist Church. It was reported by his enemies, that he had baptized himself, and thence they called him a Se-Baptist. That, however, was an ill-grounded report, inasmuch as there is no proof of it, and it is contrary to those principles contained in his writings which have already been stated. Against Mr. Smyth and other Separatists from the Established Church, the celebrated Bishop Hall took up his pen, and speaks of him in a manner which indicates the eminence he held among the ministers of that day. Alluding to him in an address to Mr. Robinson of Leyden, he says, "what is become of your partner, yea, your guide? Wo is me, he hath renounced christendom with our church, and hath washed off his former waters with new, and now condemns you all for not separating farther, no less than we condemn you for separating so far. He tells you true; your station is unsafe; either you must go forward to him, or back to us. All your Rabbis cannot answer that charge of your rebaptized brother. If we be a true church, you must return; if we be not, as a false church is no church of God,

you must rebaptize. If our baptism be good, then is our constitution good."*

About the year 1611, Mr Smyth died, and was succeeded by Mr Helwisse, in company with whom the church returned to London, in 1614. When we consider the reasons for that event, it presents a sublime moral spectacle to which history has not done justice. Although the spirit of persecution was still raging in England, they became impressed with the idea that to fly from it, betrayed a want of courage and of true fidelity to Christ. Believing that they were converted to God in order to be lights in the world holding forth the word of life, they felt bound, they said, to let their light shine by their conversation amongst the wicked, as the greatest means of converting them and destroying anti-christ's kingdom: *overcoming* (not by flying away, but) *by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, not loving their lives unto the death.* Speaking of the Divine goodness to Israel under the ancient dispensation they say, "did God thus respect his work and people then, as all must put to their helping hand, and none must withdraw their shoulder lest oth-

* Bishop Hall's Apology of the Church of England, p. 722, 794, quoted by Ivimey.

ers should be discouraged, and is there no regard to be had thereof now; but any occasion, as fear of a little imprisonment or the like, may excuse any both from the Lord's work and the help of their brethren, that for want of their society and comfort are exceedingly weakened, if not overcome?" These sentiments are expressed in a tract which they put forth, entitled, "Persecution for Religion judged and condemned." If any should say, that in returning to England, they erred in judgment, all must admit that an impressive moral glory invests their characters, in the attitude which they then assumed, since they were not fanatics courting martyrdom, but calm defenders of the rights of man. It is said by an able critic of the present day, that in the treatise which they published, "they maintained with admirable explicitness, the impolicy and wickedness of persecution. They chose their ground with judgment, and defended it with scriptural fidelity; and the arguments which they employed, are suited to every age and to every form of persecution. The distinct province of politics and religion, of God and the magistrate, is clearly marked, and the absurdity of persecution is thence argued. This was putting the question on its right basis, and entitles the authors of this treatise to the gratitude

and admiration of posterity."* This event occurred during the youth of Roger Williams, and we may reasonably suppose that his mind might have been strongly influenced by such an exhibition of the principles of freedom, and by the illustration of their power in so noble an example.

In considering the workings of his thoughts, it is interesting to observe how Williams's views of the spiritual nature of Christ's Kingdom, preserved him from the errors of some men, high in political life, who were connected with the Baptists, and with whom he associated in England. I refer to such men as Major-General Harrison, second in command in Cromwell's army, together with others, who though advocating liberty of conscience in all its latitude, were expecting the government of the world to be given to the saints, and the coming of Messiah's reign with great outward glory. These were called Fifth Monarchy-men, and among them were a number of Baptist ministers, such as Feake and Simson, to whom Mr. Williams refers in a letter to Governor Winthrop, soon after his return from England. "Surely, sir," he observes, "he (Major-General Harrison) is a very gallant, most deserving, heavenly man, but most high flown

* Dr. Price's History of Protestant Nonconformity, vol. I, p. 519–20.

for the kingdom of the Saints, and the Fifth Monarchy now risen, and their sun never to set again. Others, as to my knowledge, the Protector, Lord President Lawrence, and others at helm, with Sir Henry Vane, (retired into Lincolnshire, yet daily missed and courted for his assistance,) are not so full of that faith of miracles, but still imagine changes and persecutions and the very slaughter of the witnesses, before that glorious morning, so much desired of a worldly kingdom, if ever such a kingdom (*as literally it is* by so many expounded) be to arise in this present world and dispensation."* General Harrison was naturally of an ardent temperament; "of such vivacity," says Baxter, "hilarity and alacrity, as another hath when he hath drunken a cup too much." And though it might be supposed that his favorite theory would commend itself to such a glowing spirit as that of Roger Williams, yet it is pleasing to see that the latter, in all his reasonings, seemed to act under a deep impression of that saying of Christ, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, for the kingdom of God is within you."

A close view of the condition of England in that day, will convince us that the sentiments of the Baptists must have been long and deeply at

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* Knowles's Memoir, p. 263.

work there, for as soon as the pressure of a persecuting government was removed, they rose up a great multitude which astonished every beholder. Dr. Featley, their great and bitter opponent, says of their spreading sentiments, "this fire in the reign of Queen Elizabeth and King James, and our gracious sovereign, (Charles I,) till now was covered in England under the ashes; or if it broke out at any time, by the care of the ecclesiastical and civil magistrates, it was soon put out. But of late, since the unhappy distractions which our sins have brought upon us, the temporal sword being otherwise employed, and the spiritual locked up fast in the scabbard, this sect among others has so far presumed upon the patience of the state, that it hath held weekly conventicles, rebaptized hundreds of men and women together in the twilight, in rivulets and some arms of the Thames. It hath printed divers pamphlets in defence of their heresy, yea, and challenged some of our preachers to disputation."* Baxter also says, that those who at first were but a few in the city and the army, had within two or three years, grown into a multitude, and were beginning to expect some of them that the baptized saints would judge the world.†

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* Featley's Dippers dipt,—Prefaratory Epistle.

† Works XX, 297.

He wrote much against them, but in the spirit of christian candor he says, "upon a review of my arguments with Mr. Tombes upon the controversy about infant baptism, I find I have used too many provoking words, for which I am heartily sorry, and desire pardon both of God and of him."* "And for the anabaptists," he says again, "though I have written and said so much against them, as I found that most of them were persons of zeal in religion, so many of them were sober, godly people, and differed from others, but in the point of infant baptism; or at most, but in the points of predestination, free-will and perseverance."† Considering the character of controversy in those times, such a testimony as this reflects as much honor on Baxter himself, as it gives to the Baptists of that age.

Undoubtedly their increasing influence must have been a subject of wonder, since Baxter found occasion to say, that many joined them for the sake of preferment. Baillie, a high Presbyterian, and a commissioner from Scotland to the Westminster Assembly, complained that they were growing more rapidly than any other

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* Sylvester's Baxter, part II, p. 240.

† Orme's Life of Baxter, I, p. 77.

sect in the land.* Indeed they numbered among them, men of the highest talents both in the church and the state. In the first, were Tombes, Jessey, and Dyke, Gosnold, Knollys and Denne,† who had held priestly orders in the Established Church; the three first of whom were under Cromwell's comprehensive policy, appointed among the Triers of all candidates for the parish ministry of England, and the fourth was a popular preacher of London, having a congregation of three thousand persons. There were also Collins, a pupil of Busby; De Veil, a convert from Judaism, who in the Romish church of France, and in the established church of England, was much respected; Dell, a chaplain of Lord Fairfax, and till the Restoration, head of one of the Colleges in the University of Cambridge; and Vavasor Powell, a celebrated Evangelist of Wales, who was as devoted to the spread of the gospel in that principality, as were afterwards, Thomas Delaune, Benjamin Keach, and John Bunyan, in England.

Well known among them too, were Overton,‡ a friend of Milton, who in 1651 was second in command under Cromwell in Scotland, Admi-

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* Baillie's Letters, I, p. 408. See Appendix, A.

† See Appendix, B.

‡ Godwin's Commonwealth, vol. IV, p. 71. Lond. ed. 1828.

ral Penn, of the English navy, father of the American Colonist, Fleetwood, Cromwell's son-in-law, General Ludlow, a friend of Harrison, who endeavored to convince him of his error touching the Fifth Monarchy, and also the Chancellor of Ireland. They abounded in Cromwell's army, and were at one time his best friends, and at another, his most dreaded foes; for in a letter addressed by Captain Deane, to Dr. Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, it is stated that "what occasioned Oliver Cromwell, after he usurped the government of Lord Protector, to discharge at once, all the principal officers of his own regiments, upon other pretences, was, for that they were all Anabaptists."* These, while they disapproved the execution of Charles I, were equally opposed to the usurpation of Cromwell.

It would be improper to mention so many names of that day, without giving place to those of Colonel and Mrs. Hutchinson, who were distinguished for intellectual greatness, urbanity of manners and lofty piety. A manuscript on baptism, accidently found in the room of a soldier, met the eye of Mrs. Hutchinson. It led her to search the Scriptures on that subject, and then to embrace the sentiments of the Baptists;

* Quoted by Crosby, vol. II, p. 5.

but, in the language of her memoir, "being then young and modest, she thought it a kind of virtue to submit to the judgment and practice of most churches, rather than to defend a singular opinion of her own; she not being then enlightened in that great mistake of the national churches." Her husband was led, however, to investigate the point, being urged by her to consider it with direct reference to the case of their infant child. He proposed his doubts to a large number of ministers, assembled at his own table, "none of whom," says Mrs. Hutchinson, "could defend their practice with any satisfactory reason, but the *tradition* of the church from the primitive times, and their main buckler of federal holiness, which Tombes and Denne had excellently overthrown." He then asked them to say, what in their opinion, he ought to do? Most of them answered, that he ought to conform to the custom of the church, though the point were not clear to him. One, however, said, if he acted without faith in the warrant of God's word, his act would be a sin. The consequence was, the child was not baptized, and from that day, that excellent couple took their stand with those whom they had hitherto considered as practising an enormous error.* Such, in that age, was the general free-

* Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, Governor of

dom of thought, so powerfully were the minds of men roused to religious inquiry, that people of other times may well marvel at the promptness with which they carried out their convictions of truth, even though they went athwart inveterate prejudices, and time hallowed customs.

But while we are impressed with a view of the conscientiousness, piety and moral courage of the men who in those and preceding times united with the Baptists, we must not forget the fact, that with their distinguishing principle touching the constitution of the church, the doctrine of absolute liberty of conscience was identified. This cannot be expressed in clearer terms, than it is in the confession of faith, which was published by a number of Baptists in London, as early as the year 1611, under the reign of James I. The article on that point declares, "that the magistrate is not to meddle with religion, because Christ is the King and Lawgiver of the church and conscience."*

Nottingham Castle and town; Representative of the county of Nottingham in the Long Parliament, and of the town of Nottingham, in the First Parliament of Charles II, &c.—Vol. II, p. 102-4, London, 4th ed. 1822.

* Crosby, Vol. I, app. 71. When that confession was published, Mr. Robinson of Leyden put forth some strictures on those portions of it which he deemed unsound. The article quoted above was one of those parts, and is copied from his transcript of it.

That confession was issued by some members of the church which was under the care of that same Mr. Smyth, whose example, it was predicted in Plymouth, that Roger Williams would follow. Not a single sentence can be found in the writings of Williams himself in succeeding years, which sets forth that important principle with greater simplicity, comprehensiveness or force.

Indeed, the more fully we examine the subject, the more clearly shall we see, that in every age where men have studied the bible, and have come to the same conclusions as Roger Williams touching the constitution of the church, they have agreed with him in the doctrine of religious liberty; that at all periods, and in every country where there has been a sufficicnt degree of freedom to speak, together with a diffusion of scriptural knowledge, a class of men have risen up who were the avowed opponents of *tradition in religion and ecclesiastical power in the state;* that thence Roger Williams is only to be regarded as one of a SACRED SUCCESSION of men, who have derived the great idea which distinguished them from no source but the oracles of God, and who have been anointed by the Divine Spirit to be the preachers of this truth to the world, or called to suffer as its martyrs.

With this fact in view, while the enlightened christian examines the record of the past, in order to find there traces of "the true church," it will be well to bear in mind an important principle, which is thus beautifully expressed by Milton:

"Truth, indeed, came once into the world with her Divine Master, and was a perfect shape, most glorious to look upon; but when he ascended, and his apostles after him were laid asleep, then strait arose a wicked race of deceivers, who, as that story goes of that wicked *Typhon* with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good *Osiris*, took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the careful search which *Isis* made for the mangled body of *Osiris*, went up and down, gathering up every link still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall do till her Master's second coming. He shall bring together every joint and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection."*

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* Areopagitica, published in London, 1644.

It was with good reason that Dr. Featley* declared in the middle of the seventeenth century, that during the reigns of Edward and Elizabeth, anabaptistry had lain like fire covered up in ashes. If so it was not for want of exertion on her part to extirpate it. Proclaiming herself the sovereign of the church, she felt the least difference of religious opinion to be an infringement on her personal dignity. She breathed the spirit that reigned in the bosom of Henry VIII, when she replied to a petition of the House of Commons for church reform, "Her Majesty takes your petition to be against the prerogative of her crown. For by their full consents it hath been confirmed and enacted (as the truth herein requireth) that the full power, authority, jurisdiction and supremacy in church causes, which heretofore the Popes usurped and took to themselves, should be united and annexed to the imperial crown of this realm." It glowed in her soul, when in her speech to the Parliament in 1586, she said, "there be some fault finders with the order of the clergy, which so, may make a slander to myself and the church, whose *over-*

* This gentleman was a Presbyterian and a zealous controversialist. In 1644, he entreated "the most noble Lords," that Milton might be cut off "as a pestilent Anabaptist." The poet was cited to appear before the House of Lords to give an account of his principles.

ruler God hath made me; whose negligence cannot be excused, if any schisms or errors heretical were suffered. All which if you my Lords of the clergy do not amend, I mean to depose you."* We need not wonder therefore at the fact that in the latter part of her reign an act was passed, ordering all Anabaptists to leave the country, under penalty of imprisonment or confiscation of property. This decree shows that they existed in England to a considerable extent, which confirms what is stated by Dr. Some, who wrote against the Puritans in 1589, "that there were several Anabaptistical Conventicles in London and other places," and that "some persons of these sentiments had been at the universities." It is highly probable, therefore, that a large number of the learned Puritans who left the national church, carried out their principles to this conclusion. The opinions with which Dr. Some charges them are precisely the same as those for which Roger Williams suffered, namely, "that the ministers of the gospel ought to be maintained by the voluntary contributions of the people—that the civil power has no right to make or impose ecclesiastical laws—that the high commission court was an anti-christian

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* Hansard's parliamentary History, Vol. I, 834. Strype's Life of Whitgift, I, 494.

usurpation—that those who are qualified to teach ought not to be burthened by the civil power—that though the Lord's prayer be a rule and foundation of prayer, yet it is not to be used as a form, and that no forms of prayer ought to be imposed on the church—that the baptism administered by the Church of Rome is invalid —that a *true constitution* and discipline are essential to a true church, and that the worship of God in the established church is in many things defective."

It is worthy of note, that archbishop Whitgift's charges against the Baptists are of precisely the same character, while at the same time he observes, that their influence among the people was increased by their appearance of extraordinary piety.* If, as has been said, Roger Williams was far in advance of his age, how much more were these men in advance of theirs. Their doctrine of human liberty they learned from no school of political philosophy, nor discovered it by any superior sagacity of their own, but it was an article of their *religious faith*, received directly from that "word which giveth understanding to the simple."

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* Strype's Life of Whitgift. This prelate, of an intolerant lordly spirit, was truly after Queen Elizabeth's own heart, and Strype says she used to pun upon his name, calling him "her White-gift."

About 1575, in the eighteenth year of Elizabeth, the fires of Smithfield were rekindled. Two Dutch Baptists, John Wielmaker and Henry Ter Woort, were condemned to be burnt there. In regard to this, an eloquent letter in the Latin language was addressed to the Queen, by John Fox, the martyrologist of the Church of England, in order to dissuade her from such an act of cruelty. In it he says, "there are excommunications and close imprisonments; there are bonds; there is perpetual banishment, burning of the hand and whipping, or even slavery itself. This one thing I most earnestly beg, that the flames of Smithfield, so long ago extinguished by your happy governments, may not be again revived."* This appeal had no effect on the heart of Elizabeth, except to gain a month's reprieve, at the end of which as they refused to recant, these men were led forth from their prison to an honorable martyrdom.

During the preceding reign of Mary, the Baptists, no doubt, among the other sufferers, had their share of trial. She is often by protestants called the "bloody Mary," though it may well be questioned whether, as to her real character, she deserved to have that epithet attached to her name, any more than her father Henry, or

* Fuller, b. 9, p. 104, § 13. London, 1656.

her sister Elizabeth. True, her spirit was fierce and intolerant; but so was their's. She, however, was surrounded with every incentive to persecution; for, in addition to her veneration for the Romish church, she was prompted by a sense of personal honor. She knew that her father's secession from the see of Rome, was not for the sake of conscience, but from the impulse of lawless passion. With her, protestantism was not the cause of religion, but the cause of Anne Boleyn; and catholicism was not only the cause of religion, but the cause of her repudiated and dishonored mother. Before coming to the throne she had been closely watched, denied the mass, and the privilege of worship according to her wishes. Who can wonder then, at the rebound of her spirit when the day of her power came, associated as the whole subject of controversy was with mere family bickering; a fact gloried in at Rome to this day, where is exhibited at the Vatican library, on the one hand, Henry's defence of popery, and on the other, his love letters to Anne Boleyn, written from Rome at the time he was seeking a divorce from Catharine of Arragon.

A striking instance of the persecuting spirit of Mary's reign, is mentioned by Spanheim, who says that Daniel George, of Delft, in Holland, died in London, and was honorably interred in

St. Lawrence's church. Three years after, it was discovered that he was an anabaptist; then his corpse was disinterred and burnt, his picture was also burnt, and his followers were sought after with the most rigid scrutiny. At that time too, a society of persons, whom Brandt denominates in his History of the Reformation,* the low-country exiles, was broken up, and after a northern journey, found several congregations of Baptists at Wismar.

One of the mildest and most religious princes that ever sat on the English throne, was the brother of Mary, Edward VI; and one of the most touching spectacles presented to us in English history, is that of this young monarch in tears, arguing with Cranmer against the necessity of signing the death-warrant of Joan Bocher, commonly called Joan of Kent. She was a Baptist, a pious and useful woman. "She was," says Strype, "a great disperser of Tyndal's New Testament, and was a great reader of scripture herself; which book also, she dispersed in the court, and so became known to certain women of quality, and was particularly acquainted with Mrs. Anne Askew. She used for greater secresy to tie the books with strings under her apparel, and so pass with them into

* Vol. I, b. IV.

the court."* As Cranmer was insisting on her death, he was deeply affected with the reply of the young King, who said, "if I do wrong, since it is in submission to your authority, you shall answer it before God." But neither the arguments of justice, the plea of mercy, or the tears of youthful royalty could avail to stay the hand of a bigotry, which in such cases, extinguished all the sympathies of human nature.

From some remarks of Sir James Mackintosh, it seems to be a clear point, that though the Baptists suffered from persecution in the reign of Edward VI, yet the Papists were comparatively free. "The fact," he says, "that the blood of no Roman Catholic was spilt on account of religion in Edward's reign, is indisputable."†

It is said by Bishop Burnet, that none of the events of this reign tended so much to injure Cranmer, as the part he took in the burning of George Van Pare, a Dutch Baptist. His manly virtue, his consistent piety, his serenity at the stake, won the sympathies of the people, so that when Cranmer himself was burnt in Mary's reign, "they called it a just retaliation."

From Bishop Burnet, we learn that in 1549 there were many Anabaptists in England, who

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* Strype's Ecc'l Mem. vol. II, p. 214.

† Mackintosh's History of England, II, 271, 318.

had fled from Germany. "They held, that infant baptism was no baptism, and so were rebaptized."* Many books were written against them; but in 1550, they were denied the mercy which was dispensed to others; for "last of all," says Burnet, "came the King's general pardon, out of which those in the tower or other prisons on account of the State, as also all Anabaptists were excepted."† This is very similar to what took place in the preceding reign, when the Baptists were excluded from the act of grace, published by Henry VIII, under whose direction too, in 1536, was issued the national creed, approved by "the whole clergy of the realm," declaring that "infants must needs be christened, because they be born in original sin, which sin must needs be remitted, which cannot be done, but by the sacrament of baptism, whereby they receive the Holy Ghost, which exerciseth the grace and efficacy in them, and cleanseth and purifieth them by his most secret virtue and operation." Is it not remarkable that the Baptists of that day were the chief defenders of the doctrine of infant salvation, as it is now held, and drew down on their heads

* Burnet, II, p. 143.

† History of the Reformation abridged, p. 13. History of the Reformation, II, p. 143. London, 1750. See Strype, M. II, 1, 369.

the thunders of the hierarchy, because they made no distinction "between the infant of a Christian and a Turk," but said that all might be saved without baptism?

We have already noticed a fact connected with the dissemination of Tyndal's translation of the scriptures in England. No man of his times did more than he, to break the power of tradition over the human mind, by rousing a spirit of inquiry, and exalting God's word as the only rule of a christian's faith. Coming from the borders of Wales, where the spirit of Wickliffe still lingered, he seemed to be clothed with that spirit as with a garment, and to walk in the light of that morning star of the reformation. Firm in the belief that the bible in itself possessed the redeeming principle which was needed to renovate a benighted and worldly church, and charmed with the beauty of truth in its own simplicity, he contemplated with grief the state of christendom; while he was musing the fire burned, and he was possessed with a zeal which mocked resistance, to spread through his country the gospel of Christ in the vernacular tongue. He fell a martyr in the best of causes, being burnt as a heretic in Flanders, in 1532, while preparing a new edition of the bible. Although we know of no instance of Tyndal's immersing any on a profession of their faith, yet it is certain

that in his writings he set that distinctly forth as the true baptism which the scriptures inculcate.*

Although the Baptists of that age had no historian of their own, and the allusions to them by various writers are tinctured with prejudice, yet sufficient evidence of their number and their power exists, in the declarations of their opponents, and the edicts of courts. The testimony of a man like Bishop Latimer, ought not to be overlooked, who in a sermon before Edward VI, referring to the Baptists of the preceding reign, said, "they who were burnt here in divers parts of England, as I heard of credible men, (I saw them not myself,) went to their death even intrepid as ye will say, without any fear in the world, cheerfully. Then I have to tell you what I heard of late, by the relation of a credible person and worshipful man, of a town of this realm of England, that hath above five hundred heretics of this erroneous opinion in it as he said."†

A fact like this must strengthen very much the position of those who say that a large pro-

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* The obedience of all degrees proved by God's worde, imprinted by Wyllyam Copland, at London, 1561. See Appendix C.

† Crosby, vol. I, p. 62.

portion of the followers of Wickliffe and the Lollards were Baptists. Certain it is, that the writings of Wickliffe were soon carried into Bohemia, and quickened the spirit of reform which was glowing in the bosoms of Jerome of Prague, and John Huss. A letter written from that country to Erasmus in 1519, directly states that the followers of Huss received no rule of faith but the bible, and admitted none into their communion but those who had been immersed, rejecting at the same time the rites and ceremonies of the church. Indeed, the council which condemned Wickliffe, convened at Blackfriars in 1382, accused him of saying that the infants of believers could be saved without baptism, and "that none were members of the church visible, who did not appear to be members of the church invisible; and that none had a right to church membership who did not make a public profession, and profess obedience to Christ." Various protestant and catholic writers agree in saying explicitly that Wickliffe rejected infant baptism, and thence support the opinion that his sentiments were the same as those of the modern Baptists. Starck, court preacher at Darmstadt, in his History of Baptism, says, as the Bohemians who were Wickliffites, rejected infant baptism, it is *probable* that he did so himself.*

* Starck's History of Baptism, Leipsic, 1789, p. 117.

During this long period, including the rise of Wickliffe and the Reformation, while the Baptists were thus suffering in Great Britain, there were not wanting those on the continent of Europe who avowed the same opinions, and braved the like hazards. While in England many of them were suffering the loss of all things, among whom was Sawtry, the first English martyr, their principles were at work in other lands. Opposed as they were to the existing system of making the baptismal register an instrument of state police, in 1528, the Senate of Zurich issued an edict against rebaptization, under the penalty of being drowned. Two years before that, a man was drowned at Zurich for the same offence. It was Felix Manz, of noble family, who, together with Grebel, first originated a Baptist Society at Zurich, and both are said, by Meshovius, a catholic writer, to have been men of extensive learning.* About the same time, there were public discussions on that subject in Switzerland, between Oecolampadius and some Baptist teachers at Basle, and also between others of the same faith, and the ministers of the established church at Berne. Even Zuinglius, at one time, avowed his conviction that the sen-

* Meshovius, lib. II, c. I. Apud Gill, vol. II, p. 272. London, 1773.

timents of the Baptists were true. They were broached at Wittenberg in 1522, and made a favorable impression on the mind of Melancthon.* Luther made a powerful effort to save his amiable friend from their influence, and afterwards procured the banishment of Carlostadt and several others, for maintaining principles so obnoxious to the ruling powers, and which he thought would endanger the progress of the reformation. "I confess," says Dr. Haweis, "I have always honored Carlostadt. In learning, he was Luther's equal; in some of his opinions respecting the eucharist, more scriptural, and only beneath him in a commanding popularity of address. The obstinacy of Luther's character is indefensible. He claimed the authority to dictate, which he was himself so averse to allow the Pope. Let us drop a tear over human infirmity, learn by experience to bear and forbear, and remember always that the best of men are but men at best."†

From the evidence which history furnishes of the extensive spread of Baptist sentiments, it needs no comment of ours to show the absurdity of a statement which has been often repeated,

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* See Appendix D.

† History of the Revival and Progress of the Church of Christ, &c. By Rev. T. Haweis, LL. B. and M. D., Rector of All-Saints, Aldwinckle, Northamptonshire. Worcester ed. 1803, p. 29, 34.

that the Baptist denomination in Europe, originated in the movements of some fanatics in Munster, a city of Westphalia, in the early part of the sixteenth century. It might task our ingenuity or our charity to account for this, did we not know that even men well versed in history, seldom take much trouble to ascertain the truth of ill reports touching a despised or dreaded sect; a truth illustrated by the fact, that for many years in a neighboring state, the name of Roger Williams was but little known, except as an anabaptist, an opposer of government, and a disturber of the public peace. Bishop Burnet however, candidly acknowledges that the Baptists have been unjustly injured, by being identified with the men who engaged in the political disturbances of Munster. He attributes the rise of the Baptists in Germany, to their carrying out the principles of Luther, regarding the sufficiency of the Scriptures, and the rights of private judgment;* and in this the Catholic writers agree with him, who charge Luther with being the father of the German Baptists, and say that when he persecuted them, "he let out the life of his own cause."† They themselves declared that they learned their principles from that great

* Burnet's History of Reformation, II, 176.

† Robinson's Ecc'l Researches, p. 543.

reformer; an assertion which reminds us of the fact, that Melancthon confessed that Luther and he were here attacked in a "weak point," and in reviewing the whole matter said, "the questions concerning baptism affected me, and in my opinion not without good reason."*

The truth is, the revolution at Munster arose from two causes. First, the galling slavery of the feudal system which pressed sorely on the peasants; secondly, the spirit of liberty which the writings of Luther had done much to arouse, and which was diffused among the people of the country, by the preaching of Thomas Muncer, a Baptist Minister, who had been a parish priest, and afterwards, a disciple of Luther. The example of Luther too, must have had a powerful effect. Had he not kindled a fire near Wittenberg, assembled ten thousand people of all orders, publicly burnt the Pope's decree and the canons of the church, and been declared by the Emperor and Princes, an enemy of the holy Roman empire? Even peasants groaning under civil bondage, could reason from such an example, tending as it did to elicit those latent sparks of love to liberty, which lie deeply hidden in the bosoms of the multitude. Nevertheless, the troubles at Munster were commenced in 1532,

* Planck's History of Protestant Theology, Vol. II, p. 47.

by Bernard Rotman, a Lutheran minister, not a Baptist.* Some months after, the peasants were in arms; Muncer drew up for them their manifesto of twelve articles, copies of which were presented to the princes, scattered through Germany, setting forth in a convincing manner, the justice of their cause, and has drawn from Voltaire an eloquent eulogium.† It is said that at the close of it, they appealed to Luther, who answered by showing that a state of servitude is not inconsistent with religion, and that their complaints against tythes, indicated a wish to annihilate civil government.‡ The army of the peasants was composed of men of various characters, among whom were the most ignorant and wild fanatics; but no denomination of christians is responsible for their proceedings, nor even Luther himself, who did more than any other man, to rouse those spirits, which at last, no earthly power could control.

During the long night which preceded the rise of Wickliffe, the general ignorance was so great, that few thought for themselves. The Papal government was then in the height of its power, and among the nations which lay beneath

* Dr. Gill's Collections, vol. II, 271.

† Additions to General History, vol. 30. See Appendix E.

‡ Robinson's Ecc'l Researches, p. 552.

the shadow of its wings, scarcely one durst peep or mutter. Still the light of primitive christianity was not entirely extinguished, nor the spirit of inquiry utterly crushed. Here and there it would now and then break forth, not only awakening hope amongst the oppressed, but spreading alarm amongst the powerful;

> "For though the structure of a tyrant's throne,
> Rise on the necks of half the suffering world,
> Fear trembles in the cement."

If we look any where for the exhibition of an uncorrupt christianity, the brightest spots to be found are the valleys of Piedmont, and of Wales. Among the former, secluded from the world, lived men remarkable for their simple manners and their pure faith, who never acknowledged the dominion of Rome. They were called Waldenses and Albigenses; they existed in different societies, but were generally distinguished for their love of religious liberty, and with singleness of heart opposed the authority of the bible to human tradition. Archbishop Usher considers them as constituting some of the links in that chain of apostolic succession, which was with him an important and a favorite subject. Occasionally advocates of their sentiments appeared in different countries. As some independent and powerful mind would study their doctrines and catch their spirit, and thence proceed

to give them free expression, all society would be moved, and a new proof would be furnished of the power of truth to make its way amidst the greatest obstacles. About the year 1315, (in the words of Fuller, an English historian,) Walter Lollard, that German preacher, or as Peter Perin calls him in his history of the Waldenses, one of their barbs, (or pastors,) came into England, a man in great renown among them; and who was so eminent in England, that, as in France, they were called Berengarians, from Berengarius, and Petrobrusians, from Peter Bruis, and in Italy and Flanders, Arnoldists, from the famous Arnold of Brescia; so did the Waldensian christians for many generations after, bear the name of this worthy man, being called Lollards."

At the time when Cromwell held the balance of power in Europe, an event occurred which engaged his warmest sympathy in behalf of the Waldenses of Piedmont, "who," says Godwin, "were regarded as having entertained the principles of the reformed religion before Luther, and as never having bowed the neck to the Roman Catholic superstition."* By an edict of the Duke of Savoy, they were commanded to adhere to the Catholic faith. They refused, and a dreadful persecution followed. The news

* Godwin's Commonwealth, vol. 4, p. 205.

touched the heart of Cromwell, roused that love of liberty which had been the presiding principle of his conduct until after the battle of Worcester when ambition turned him, and led him to utter the memorable sentence, that "God regards the right of conscience, and authority over it, to belong to himself alone." With characteristic energy, he immediately despatched Sir Samuel Morland, under-secretary to Thurloe, to Turin, and sent letters to France and other powers, demanding redress.*

Morland having executed his mission, wrote a history of these victims of persecution, in which he presents a most affecting picture of their faith and suffering. Lovers of scriptural simplicity, nothing could induce them to submit to the authority of Rome. Their history was also written by Chesannion,† a Frenchman, who denies what had been said by some, that they rejected the sacrament of baptism, but says, "they only counted it unnecessary to infants, because they are not of age to believe nor capable of giving evidence of their faith." This remark however, is not of universal application; some of them practised infant baptism, but a

* Jones's Ch. His. vol. II, p. 322.

† Jones spells his name Chassagnon; Crosby, Chassanian; Ivimey, Chessanion.

large portion of them rejected it as a human invention.

One of the most recent and celebrated works in Ecclesiastical History which has appeared on the continent of Europe, is by M. De Potter, who, in a compendious account of these people, says, they called the Pope antichrist, opposed the payment of tythes, abolished the distinctions in the priesthood, denied the authority of councils, rejected all the ceremonies of baptism except simple ablution, and laying stress on the truth that in infancy there can be no actual conversion to the christian faith, they therefore baptized anew all those who left the Romish Church, wishing to embrace their doctrines.

They asserted that the efficacy of sacraments depended on the character of the recipient, that the sanctification of the bread and the wine took place in the mouth of the worthy communicant and not in the hands of the priest who consecrated the elements without possessing the purity demanded by his office—that an honest layman had more power to absolve the faithful from their sins than a bad priest, that the worship of God consisted more in practical virtues than in ceremonies, that a priest who set himself up for a mediator between heaven and men, offended God, dishonored religion, and degraded himself.

They rejected the doctrine that marriage is a sacrament; denied that the church had the right to ordain celibacy for her ministers; refused to worship saints and relics, saying that God only is to be adored; abolished the customs of the church touching holidays, altars, masses, religious chants, bells, pontifical ornaments, images—the worship of which appeared to them as idolatry; and wax tapers, for which they said God had given no command. In a word, *they rejected every thing which they did not find enjoined in the gospel, and the sacred scriptures.* Thence, moreover, they condemned prayers for the dead, indulgences, pilgrimages, the doctrine of purgatory, admitting only a heaven and a hell, and prohibited oaths, allowing only simple affirmation."*

In surveying ecclesiastical history, it is interesting to see how the faith of this people, having found an asylum amidst the rocks and mountains, the dens and caves of the earth, would thence go forth to extend its influence even unto high places. In the year 1215, this fact became a matter of complaint to the Pope by the Bishop of Arles, who said that some heretics had taught there, that it was to no purpose to baptize children, since they could have no forgiveness of

* De Potter, vol. VI, p. 405. See Appendix, F.

sins thereby, no faith, no charity." In that year the Lateran Council, under Innocent III, decreed that "the sacrament of baptism performed in water with invocation of the Trinity, is profitable for salvation, both to adult persons and also to infants, by whomsoever administered in the form of the church."* That Pope himself declared that "unless the sword of the faithful extirpated the Waldenses, their doctrine would soon corrupt all Europe."†

In the time of Henry II, some of them appeared in England, and in the year 1160, a council was summoned at Oxford to examine them. "When asked who they were," says Rapin, "they answered that they were christians and followers of the apostles."‡ "From the acts of this council we learn," says De Potter, "that these publicani (as they were called) were spread abroad extensively in France, Spain, Italy and Germany, and on account of the lenity shown to them, had multiplied like the sand of the sea, and at last had come to penetrate even into England. They were about thirty persons, as many men as women, all Germans, and were living

* Opera Innocent tertii, tome 2, p. 776. Apud Wall, vol. II, 242. Ed. London, 1720.

† Spanheim's Ecc'l. Annals. London, 1829.

‡ Rapin's Hist. of Eng. I, 350. Ed. Lond. folio, 1732.

under the direction of one named Gerard, who alone among them had received some education, and spoke various languages. He was orthodox in his opinions touching the divinity, but he rejected the sacraments, especially the baptism of infants, the eucharist (transubstantiation) and the marriage of the catholics, (that is as a sacrament). They were banished from Oxford, and no one was allowed to receive them, or render them the least assistance. These unhappy beings wandered through the country without finding an asylum, and as it was a very rigorous season, they perished from hunger and cold. This pious severity, says William of Newbridge, purged England of so pestilential a heresy."*

There is reason to think that in the middle of the twelfth century, congregations of Waldensian Baptists were gathered in Switzerland and France, under the name of Apostlici, for in the year 1147, we find Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, complaining against the Earl of St. Gyles for favoring one of their noted teachers, named Henry, who is charged with "hindering infants from the life of Christ, the grace of baptism being denied them."† This Henry was a friend of the celebrated Peter de Bruis, and was truly

* Guilelm. Nubrigens, quoted by De Potter, vol. 6, 391.

† Mosheim, Cent. XII, Part II, Chap. 5, §8.

a kindred spirit. He held private assemblies, to whom he taught his doctrines, which were distinguished by nothing peculiar, except his entire rejection of infant baptism, the authority and ceremonies of the Church of Rome. Bernard, who became famous as a crusade preacher, having procured the condemnation of Abelard, the distinguished advocate of Free Inquiry,* proceeded at length to attack Henry and his adherents in a most bitter and calumnious spirit. His object at last was gained; for in about 1148, his victim died in prison. Both Henry and Peter de Bruis were simple hearted christians, zealous teachers, bold reprovers of the corrupt morals of the papal clergy, and standing together against a host of opponents, counted not their lives dear for the sake of truth.† Peter was burned to death at St. Gyles, in the year 1150. The sentiments of these two men concerning baptism, were alike; for of the latter, Mosheim observes, "it is certain that one of his tenets was, that no persons whatever, were to be baptized before they came to the full use of reason.‡

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* Guizot, History of Civilization, p. 165. N. Y. Ed. 1838.

† "Like Peter de Bruis and Henry, the Waldenses were free from all *heresies of opinion*, and sought only to restore an apostolic purity of practice." Gieseler, II, 376. Phil. ed. 1836.

‡ Mosheim, Cent. XII, p. 2, c. 5, §7.

But there was another, who with these, formed a trio of heroic and devout defenders of the primitive faith, another, whose name should be embalmed in the memory of every friend of religion and of man; I mean, Arnold of Brescia, also a disciple of Peter de Bruis. This very year seven centuries are completed, since his condemnation by the Lateran Council, and in sixteen years afterwards, his execution occurred at Rome, where his body was burned, and the ashes were cast into the Tiber. He was at first a reader of the church at Brescia, then travelled in France where he studied with the famous Abelard, and became one of the most profound scholars and eloquent preachers of Italy.* His voice was first heard in the streets of Brescia, declaiming against the wealth and licentiousness of the established clergy; and from attacking them, he proceeded to reason against the union of church and state, infant baptism, and transubstantiation. The Pope branded his opinions with the name of "heresy of the politicians," and banishing him from Italy, he fled to Switzerland, where he taught the people of Zurich to frame a free constitution. Ere long, however, he boldly resolved to plant the standard of reform in the very heart of Rome. Vindicating

* Dr. Allix, churches of Piedmont, p. 171.

the spirituality of the church, religious liberty, and the rights of the people, he uttered "thoughts that breathed and words that burned;" the city was roused, many nobles joined his cause, and the doctrines of reform prevailed. Rome again heard, says Sismondi, "the words Roman republic, Roman senate, comitia of the people."* The change which followed, was the most remarkable event of the twelfth century. The civil power of the Pope was suspended. "He is but your bishop," said Arnold to the Romans; "let him therefore have spiritual jurisdiction. The government of Rome, its civil establishments and territories belong to you." Propositions to this effect were made to the Pope. Innocent II died of mortification at Arnold's success. The succeeding Popes, Celestine and Lucius, reigned but a short time, and could do nothing to re-establish the papal power. The senators then refused to accord in the consecration of Eugenius III, unless he would assent to the separation of the spiritual from civil jurisdiction, on which account he withdrew from Rome, and was consecrated in a neighboring fortress. He was succeeded by Adrian IV, into whose hands Arnold was delivered by the interposition of the German Emperor. His principles

* Sismondi's History of Italian Republics, p. 33. Lond. 1832. Encyclopedia Britannica, article Arnold.

long survived him, and Arnoldist, became another name for a friend of liberty and religion.

The wide extent to which sentiments similar to those of Arnold of Brescia had spread, may be learned from a celebrated letter, which was written in the year 1140, and which Dr. Allix has translated. He says,* "Mabillon has preserved the letter of Evervinus Præpositus, of Steinfield, in the diocess of Cologne. Evervinus first describes a class manichæans; then another order of heretics. These latter, he charges with denying, 1st, that the body of Christ is made on the altar, 2d, asserting that the apostolical dignity had been lost by the wickedness of the priesthood, 3d, denying the sacraments, except baptism, which they give only to those who are come of age, alleging that place of the gospel, "whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" 4th, rejecting the mediation of saints, 5th, the virtue of fasting, 6th, denying the doctrine of Purgatory, and, 7th, asserting this great principle, "all other things observed in the church, which have not been established by Christ himself or his Apostles, they call superstitious."† After calling on St. Bernard to aid

* Page 145.

† This letter of Evervinus, may be found, in the Latin language, in Gieseler's Ecclesiastical History, vol. II, p. 360,

in resisting these mischievous principles, he says, "I let you know also, that those of them who have returned to our church, told us, that they had great numbers of their persuasion scattered almost every where, and that amongst them, were many of our clergy and monks; and as for those who were burnt, they in the defence they made for themselves, told us, that this their heresy, had *been concealed from the times of the martyrs until now*, and that it had been preserved in Greece and some other countries."* Who is not struck with admiration at the thought, that the hand of Providence should have brought down to these days, so clear a testimony to the characters of those faithful ones, who, in ages of the grossest superstition, never bowed their knees at the shrines of papal idolatry? Here we have the testimony of a learned ecclesiastic, given seven centuries ago, that men, who, we know, if they were now living would be called by our name, declared in

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note. In his text, however, Gieseler does not, like Allix, mark the distinction which Evervinus makes between these two orders of hereties. The latter class were Orthodox Baptists. When it is said, that they denied all the sacraments except baptism, it must be remembered that the catholics have *seven* sacraments, and they considered a man as giving up the Lord's Supper, if he denied transubstantiation.

* Dr. Allix, p. 143. Lond. Ed. 1690.

their own behalf with their dying breath, that they had broached *no innovation*, but held those principles which had been handed down from the age of primitive christianity. Here the persecutors, the apostates, and the martyrs, unite in leaving a memorial in honor of "a great cloud of witnesses, of whom the world was not worthy."

From facts like these, it is clear that those have reason for their opinion, who say that the Baptists may trace the history of their sentiments through the old Waldensian churches. Mosheim, who was far from having any bias in favor of such a position, justly observes, that before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe, persons who adhered tenaciously to the principles of the modern Dutch Baptists.* The various representations given of the Waldenses by different writers, may be easily accounted for, if we remember that perfect liberty of conscience was cherished amongst them, that they worshipped not the idol of uniformity, and that they furnished a shelter, as far as they could, for all dissenters who were persecuted by the established church.† Their opponents not only

* Ecc'l History, Cent. XVI, sect. III, P. II, c. 3, § 2.

† Robinson's Ecclesiastical Researches, p. 440.

followed them with menaces and groundless calumnies, but distorted the confessions which they made under the influence of intimidation. But the most learned historians of Europe are setting this point in a clearer light; and touching it, I quote a name of high authority when I mention that of Starck, court preacher at Darmstadt, who says in his history of baptism, that "if instead of looking only at particular confessions, we follow out their general mode of thinking, we find that they not only rejected infant baptism, but rebaptized those who passed from the Catholic church to them, and that although the anabaptists held a connexion with Munzer, Storck, Grebel, Stubner, and Keller, the WALDENSES WERE THEIR PREDECESSORS."*

A century before Arnold of Brescia, Berengarius, Archdeacon of Angiers, and Bruno, his Bishop, made some attempts at reformation. It is evident that their efforts excited much attention, and spread a feeling of alarm amongst the clergy. The Bishop of Liege wrote to Henry I, King of France, saying, "there is a report come out of France, and which goes through all Germany, that these two do maintain that the Lord's body (the host) is not the body, but a

* Starck's History of Baptism, p. 115, 118. Leipsic, 1789.

shadow or figure of the Lord's body;* and that they do disannul lawful marriages, and as far as in them lies, overthrow the baptism of infants."† About the same time, too, it is evident that the spirit of nonconformity was abroad in Italy, for according to Dr. Allix, D'Achery informs us, that in 1025, a Synod was held at Arras, by Gerard, Bishop of Cambray and Arras, to examine some disciples of Gundulphus, whose doctrines had spread into the diocess of Liege and Cambray, in the low countries. It appears that they rejected all authority in religion except that of Christ and the Apostles, and all the peculiarities of the Romish church. The Bishop said, the reason these men gave for rejecting infant baptism was this: "Because to an infant that neither *wills* nor *runs*, that knows nothing of faith, is ignorant of its own salvation and welfare, in whom there can be no desire of regeneration or confession, the will, faith and confession of another, seem not in the least to appertain."‡ Such a mode of reasoning on the ground of religious faith, apart from the authority of the

* Luther held to consubstantiation. He therefore regarded Berengarius as a heretic, while the disciples of Calvin praised him.—Gieseler's Ecc'l Hist. II, p. 111.

† Wall, II, 216. Allix, 123.

‡ The great stress laid by the Romanists on baptism, probably led some of them to disregard it entirely. See Allix, 95.

church, was not at all in keeping with the spirit of that age, and it shows that there were men who would have purified and elevated the national mind, had it not been for that alliance between the Church and the State, which was designed to crush in the germ every undertaking which looked toward the improvement of the people.

Such was the state of nonconformity in Italy. They had good reason for saying that they introduced no innovation; for apart from the proofs which they might have brought from their own country, there are for us, strong corresponding ones in Wales, where there is good reason to believe that the gospel was introduced as early as the year 63, and where it was preserved in a great degree free from the corruptions of Romanism. In the year 596, when Austin was sent into England by that most politic and ambitious Pope, Gregory VII, he found it much easier to bring the Pagan Saxons to his terms, than the old British bishops. It would be a natural supposition that as Constantine was himself of British origin, and had promoted christianity in his own country with royal munificence, that religion must have deteriorated from its primitive simplicity. Nevertheless, Austin found it in a state of comparative purity, for the British bishops of that day, were like

those of whom Dupin speaks, at an earlier period, who were freely supported by their brethren, and who would have deemed it beneath them to accept of the Emperor's allowance.* The demands which Austin made of them, shed some light on their condition, and need no comment. They were these; first, they should keep Easter after the Romish manner; and secondly, that they *should give christendome to children.* They abjured his authority, and refused compliance, although he endeavored to dazzle them with a miracle. Austin was incensed, and threatened to enforce his demands with the sword; a menace which was afterwards put in execution against a class of men, whose most heinous fault in the sight of Rome, was a desire to preserve their religious freedom, to maintain the spirituality of the church, and to keep it independent of the state.

I trust no apology is necessary for my thus causing to pass in review before you on this occasion, a class of men to whom we owe a debt of gratitude, and who deserve to be held in lasting remembrance, who proclaimed through evil and through good report the same great principles, for the sake of which Roger Williams came as a pilgrim to these our shores, for the opera-

* Rapin, p. 29.

tion of which this commonwealth furnished the first clear field, wherein this Church stands as the first sacred memorial. I have done it the more readily, because there is to some extent, a popular impression that he was the father of our denomination in this country, and also that by his political sagacity, he discovered the worth of that great principle of unlimited religious liberty which is so essential to the peace and progress of states, which only of late years has triumphed in New-England, and which is only beginning its conquests in other lands. I have wished to show that he derived that principle from his Bible, that it was a primary element of his religious faith, that he held it in common with many contemporaries in England, who had received it as a moral heritage from the earliest times. Lured by the sound of religious liberty in America, he crossed the ocean; and when he found in Boston a church enforcing its creed by the sword of the magistrate, he at once declared it to be anti-christian, and refused to unite with it unless they abjured that principle. Having thus on his first landing, announced the truth which was so dear to him, he ceased not to maintain it, until he had seen the wrath of man overruled for its promotion, and had established here a commonwealth in which the Church was disconnected from the State, and religion was

proclaimed to be free. To him then belongs not the honor of making a moral discovery, but the honor of nobly maintaining a truth for which he knew others were contending even unto death; the honor of a distinguished place in a long line of faithful witnesses which is seen through the vista of ages stretching into the dim distance, but which shall shine with immortal glory in that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest, when the first shall be last, and the last first.

The character of Roger Williams is an interesting subject of study. The more we contemplate it, the more shall we be struck with the rare combination of virtues which formed it; the more shall we admire the strength of his mind and the enlargedness of his heart, the warm attachment which he felt for his own opinions, connected with a deep respect for the right of private judgment in others; the zeal with which he maintained his own mental independence, and his "godly jealousy" for that of his neighbor; the frankness with which he avowed his sentiments, and the heroic fortitude with which he defended them; the clearness with which he saw the bearings of a principle, and the unflinching fidelity with which he carried it out to its just conclusion. This last trait of his character

explains an act of his life, which to many has seemed at the first quite unaccountable. I mean, his leaving the church a few months after its constitution, and joining the Seekers, who, as they looked over christendom and saw the corruptions which generally prevailed, concluded that the divinely authorized ministry of the church had been lost, and that before any could be empowered to administer ordinances, a new apostleship must be commissioned. His mind seems to have been pressed with difficulties touching the right of a church to revive a lost institution, and his conclusion was only a logical deduction from what was then a popular principle, that the authority of a ministry to dispense ordinances depended on the evidence of an apostolic succession. In his view the line of that succession could not be traced; for he would as soon have thought of calling the christian dispensation itself a failure, as of admitting the Romish priesthood to be the authorized ministry of Christ. In regard to that body of men, it appears that very many, during ages before him, had declared the same opinion; but instead of leading them to wait for a new apostleship, it prepared them to feel the force of the truth, that since all Christ's commands are to be obeyed, the church hath power at any period to restore

to their pristine purity those lost rites which he has enjoined.*

Touching this latter principle, the mind of Mr. Williams seems to have been troubled with doubts, and as he looked at the history of christendom, as far as the outward constitution of the church was concerned, he was struck with the signs of a general apostacy. His eye rested on times when the whole field of his vision was occupied by churches which were strictly national, identified with the civil state, and thence in his view, anti-christian, since Christ himself had said, "my kingdom is not of this world." That view however was connected with a fervent charity towards individuals in all communions as christian men, for he said that even the whole generation of the *righteous*, had thus fallen away. In the church of Rome he saw that the ordinances of the New Testament had been absolutely lost; in regard to baptism the whole eastern church agreed with him in this opinion;† and when he looked to England, he saw there a persecuting national church, which had, by a mere political accident become separated from Rome, with a monarch as ambitious and as craven as Pontius Pilate for its head, yet pro-

* Mr. Smyth's reasoning, 1609, quoted by Ivimey, I, 118.

† See Appendix, G.

claimed Defender of the Faith. What homage could a clear sighted honest thinker like Roger Williams, pay to the peculiar authority of such a priesthood? It could challenge no respect from him, any more than the divine commission of Mahomet. And if it were true that the validity of christian ordinances depend on a regular apostolic succession, the only logical alternative then left for him was, that the ordinances must be forever abandoned, or that a new apostleship must be commissioned from Heaven.* His acting on that conclusion, proved the fidelity of his mind to the principles which he embraced, and displayed the moral greatness of his soul. And if we ourselves were convinced that such a principle were true, who of us would not pursue the same course? Far sooner would I wait with longing eyes for a new apostleship to be raised up by an Almighty hand, than believe that a worldly hierarchy like that which threw its dazzling splendors around the altars of the Pope and Henry VIII, could boast itself pre-eminently of a commission which had descended from the skies, and bore the seal of Christ.

It is remarkable, that notwithstanding all the hardships which Mr. Williams endured, he

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* See Appendix, H.

should have lived more than half a century after his arrival in this country, and enjoyed a vigorous old age. Vigorous indeed it was, for it would seem that after he had completed threescore years and ten, his physical force had not abated, and his mind glowed with all the ardor of his youth. What an extraordinary object is presented to our attention, when we contemplate him at the age of seventythree, embarking in a small boat, and plying the oar through that day and until the ensuing midnight, in order to reach Newport at the appointed time to engage in a public discussion with George Fox, on those points of theology wherein they differed! Truly in such an instance, we scarcely know at which to wonder most, his bodily strength, his intellectual energy, or that intense religious fervor which animated his bosom. Yet doubtless, more admirable than either of these, was that fine control over all the elements of his character, exerted by his favorite doctrine of religious liberty. However strong might have been his aversion to any class of sentiments, however pungent his invective, he never betrayed one wish to infringe on the freedom of an opponent, or to use any other than moral means in promoting his opinions. The strength of his language only indicates the warm attachment which he felt for his principles, which makes the more

remarkable what his whole life proved to be true, that he would fain yield to every man the same liberty which he claimed for himself, and would have contended as earnestly for the rights of an adversary as for his own.*

When near fourscore, we find that he was engaged in preaching to the Indians, and afterwards, amid great debility, he was employed by his fireside, in writing out those discourses for

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* There is reason to think, that to some extent, an unfair estimate of Mr. Williams's personal character has been derived from the warmth of his language in public controversy. In regard to this, much allowance is to be made for the manner of the times. Certain it is, that he possessed in a large measure that magnanimity of mind, that honesty and generosity, which not only command the esteem of men, but gain their hearts. Thence Dr. Bentley says, "in Salem, every body loved Mr. Williams. He had no personal *enemies* under any pretence; all valued his friendship. Kind treatment could win him, but opposition could not conquer him. He was not afraid to stand alone for truth, against the world." He had always a tenderness of conscience, and feared every offence against moral truth. He breathed the purest devotion. He was a friend of human nature, forgiving, upright, and pious."

In connexion with this testimony, it is proper to observe, that in some way, Mr. Williams's biographer has been led into a mistake on one point. He says, "it appears that Mr. Williams so disliked Mr. Harris, that he would not write his name at length, but abbreviated it thus, "W. Har."—[Knowles, p. 299, note.] The fact, however, is, that in various manuscripts of Williams's, I have seen the name fully written, and every case of abbreviation is in accordance with his usual style of penmanship.

circulation among them.* He thus filled thirty sheets of manuscript, and then asked aid of his friends in Boston, to enable him to publish them, saying, "he that hath a shilling and a heart to countenance and promote such a soul-work, may trust the great paymaster for an hundred or one in this life." Although he had opportunities of accumulating wealth, yet his sacrifices for the good of the colony were immense, and from the fact just mentioned, it seems that he died in a condition of honorable poverty. We are struck in this case, with a view of the benevolence of his heart and his untiring industry, which indeed can be no better proved than by the fact, that while living in London, as agent of the colony, he earned his own support by teaching languages, contrived when their funds failed, to pay their debts and maintain their credit, and at the same time living in habits of friendly intercourse with Milton, pursued with him a course of mutual instruction in the knowledge of various tongues. Constantly employed in some pursuit of literature, or work of faith, or labor of love, he closed his earthly pilgrimage early in 1683, in the eightyfourth year of his age, and was interred in his own family burial-ground, "with all the solemnity which the col-

* Letter to Gov. Bradstreet. 2 His. vol. VIII, p. 196.

ony was able to shew."* His bones were laid not far from where we are now assembled; near the spot where he first touched our shores, and where, probably, he first announced that name which constitutes this place a memorial of the good Providence of God. No marble marks his grave. Although the existence of our commonwealth be a sufficient monument of his fame, yet may the day soon come, when for our own sakes we shall see among us some fit memorial of that extraordinary man, which shall daily remind us of his character, and warm the hearts of our children with the remembrance of his virtues.

Among those who were driven from Massachusetts, soon after the departure of Roger Williams, was Mr. Chad Brown, who came to Providence in 1636, and was ordained to the ministry of this church about three years after its formation. He was one of the town proprietors, and from the day of his arrival to the present time, his name has been well known, in this, his adopted home. He was the ancestor of a large and respected family, who have for many years past, continued, by their public spirit and their liberality, to identify themselves with the fortunes of the town, with the cause of

* Calender, p. 147. Elton's edition.

literature and christianity. Contemporary with Roger Williams, he possessed a cooler temperament, and was happily adapted to sustain the interests of religion, just where that great man failed. Not being affected by the arguments of the Seekers, he maintained his standing firmly in a church which he believed to be founded on the rock of eternal truth, even "the *word* of God which abideth for ever." We know only enough of his character, to excite the wish to know more, but from that little it is clear, that he was highly esteemed as a man of sound judgment, and of a christian spirit. Often referred to, as the arbitrator of existing differences, in a state of society where individual influence was needed as a substitute for well-digested laws, he won that commendation which the Saviour pronounced when he said "blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

We know not how long the ministry of Mr. Brown continued, but we find that Mr. Wickenden, who at one time was imprisoned in New-York for preaching there without a license from the officer of the crown,* was ordained by Mr. Brown. Mr. Wickenden officiated also in

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* Jubilee Sermon by the Pastor of the First Baptist Church. N. Y. 1813.

Providence, and with his name is connected our first intelligence of the rise of a controversy, which was long agitated in this town, and throughout the commonwealth. It appears that many in that day, who were studying the constitution of the primitive church, regarded the declaration of Paul, in Hebrews, 1 : 2,* as containing a summary of essential principles, among which it was contended, that the imposition of hands on every baptized christian, held a distinct place. Although it is now very generally admitted, that "the laying on of hands" mentioned in that passage, is an allusion to the appointed sign by which the apostles conferred the extraordinary gifts of the spirit,† a knowledge of which was of course received by their converts among the *first* elements or lessons of christianity, yet then, many excellent men supposed that the phrase referred to a *perpetual ordinance*, designed to succeed baptism, the reception of both which, was as necessary to constitute a true profession of christianity, as repentance and faith were necessary to constitute a spiritual christian. With

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* Therefore, leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

† See Acts 19 : 6, and 8 : 17, 18.

this view of the case, they felt justified in urging the laying on of hands after baptism, as a term of church communion. It might, indeed, seem remarkable, if this passage were designed to be a comprehensive summary of the essential principles of outward and inward christianity, that the communion itself were not mentioned in it. Still it was regarded by many in that light, and after awhile, they were known by the name of Six Principle Baptists, although they were distinguished from others by only a single article, all agreeing as to the other five points mentioned in the passage. In 1652,* Rev. William Vaughan, of Newport, embraced this view, and hearing that a church had been formed in Providence on this basis, under the care of Rev. Mr. Wickenden, he repaired hither, and having received that rite himself, obtained the aid of Mr. Wickenden in forming a similar body at Newport.†

At that time, Rev. Gregory Dexter was engaged in preaching the gospel here. He had been a stationer in London, and had officiated as a preacher among the Baptists of that city. Having incurred the displeasure of the government by too free a use of his press, he fled to America, and in 1644, arrived at Providence.

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* Samuel Hubbard, quoted by Backus, vol. II, p. 96.

† Comer's MSS. in the possession of R. I. His. Society.

He was a correspondent of Roger Williams, and printed his Key to the Indian Language, at London, in 1643. It is probable that he, and Mr. Green, of Boston, were the only two in New-England who understood well the art of printing at that time; at any rate it is certain that Mr. Dexter used to go regularly to Boston, from year to year, to aid the latter in the publication of his almanac. It is said of him that he was remarkable for a grave and earnest manner which never forsook him, and was always intent on the work of the ministry. When Mr. Vaughan visited Providence in 1652, in order to procure the aid of Mr. Wickenden in forming a church which should hold the laying on of hands as a divine ordinance, Mr. Dexter accompanied them to Newport, and seems to have taken part in that service; from which we may infer that he had united with those who had formed a separate church here under the care of Mr. Wickenden. After a while, the latter removed his residence a short distance from the town, to the place now called Olneyville, and then the whole care of his ministry devolved on Mr. Dexter, who lived to the advanced age of ninety years.

During this period, the church was favored with the pastoral services of Rev. Thomas Olney. From Hartford, in England, he had emigrated to Salem, and was banished from that

place with his family, in 1639, the year of his arrival in Providence. His name has a place among the signatures to the civil covenant in 1640, and is found in various connexions after that time. Backus speaks of him as officiating in the ministry immediately after Roger Williams's death, and Comer, in his manuscript, says that he continued the pastoral care of the church after Mr. Wickenden left it, in 1652. The breach which then arose out of the controversy about laying on of hands as a divine rite, was afterwards healed, as the practice was adopted by the church, although it was not made an indispensable term of communion or membership. In succeeding years, however, it is not probable that any entered the church without it, and the doctrine of the imposition of hands was unanimously received for more than a century.

We know not the year when Mr. Olney's ministry was closed, but he was succeeded by Rev. Pardon Tillinghast, the ancestor of a numerous family amongst us. He was a native of England, emigrated to Connecticut, and came thence to Providence, where, for more than half a century, his life adorned the religion which he preached. It was an honorable testimony borne of him by governor Jenckes, derived from those who knew him, that he "was a man exemplary for his doctrine, as well as of an unblemished

character,"* a testimony well confirmed by his acts of disinterested benevolence. Certainly it was not without reason that Morgan Edwards said, that the ministry of this church had been expensive to the ministers themselves, though it had cost the people but little; for the first house of worship which this church possessed, was built by Mr. Tillinghast, in 1700, at his own expense. Before that year, they had worshipped in a grove, and in private houses when the weather was inclement. For his own services he would receive no pecuniary compensation, but he did not fail in his preaching to inculcate the principle maintained by Paul, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel, and that although he waved his own right to maintenance, it was the duty of the church to provide for those who should succeed him. Governor Jenckes quotes his words on that subject as the words of a man whose name was honored, and whose opinions had weight with those whom he addressed. He died in 1718, and was interred in the burial place of his family "in a good old age."

The year succeeding the death of Mr. Tillinghast, Rev. Ebenezer Jenckes, brother of the

* Gov. Jenckes's letter in Backus, II, 115.

Governor, was ordained to the pastoral office.* He was born in Pawtucket, in 1669, and was the first American minister who preached in Providence. It is pleasing to see that at so early a period, the sons of Rhode-Island were employed in the christian ministry, that the church in the wilderness was not only blessed by her sons "that came from afar," but by those who were "nursed at her side." Mr. Jenckes belonged to a family who have been known as liberal friends of literature and religion. His father, a native of Buckinghamshire in England, was a pious man, and the first who built a house in the town of Pawtucket. His brother, the Governor, a member of this church, was for a number of years, ambassador of the Colony to the Court of St. James, and distinguished not only by the urbanity of his manners and his intellectual endowments, but by the graces of religion. His son, Daniel Jenckes, who was for fortyeight years an active member here, was for forty years a member of the General Assembly, Chief Justice of this county, and a munificent donor to the college and the church. He, himself, is spoken of as a man highly esteemed for his talents and his piety, who declining most of the public offices which were urged on his

* Church Records, p. 6.

acceptance, discharged the duties of the sphere in which he moved, with honor and fidelity.

From a remark in Backus's Church History, it appears that Mr. Jenckes was not sole Pastor of the church, but a colleague of Rev. James Brown. The latter was a grandson of the minister of that name, whom we have already spoken of as the companion and successor of Roger Williams, and the grand-parent of those four brothers,* whose names are so widely known as being intimately associated with the commercial character of Providence; whose persons and actions, whose amity, enterprise and public spirit, are embalmed in the recollections of many who hear me, and with whom a number amongst us stand connected in ties of endearing relationship. They have gone from this the scene of their youth, their manhood and their age, but neither is their name extinct or their spirit departed. If while surveying the past, we might be permitted to breathe a wish for the future prosperity of Providence, it would be that all her sons might emulate the examples of these men of other generations, and exhibit their virtues on a scale proportioned to their own advantages; for then, indeed, would her "mer-

* See Appendix, I.

chants be princes," and wisdom and knowledge would be the stability of her times.

During the ministry of Mr. James Brown, an event occurred, which showed that more importance began to be attached to the imposition of hands at that time, than during preceding years. The church at Newport had been blessed with a revival of religion, and with the hope of promoting one in Providence, Mr. Walton, a young minister of liberal education, was invited to preach here. He was willing to practice the laying on of hands, but not as a divine ordinance, necessary to church fellowship. Mr. Windsor, then a deacon of the church, was the leader of a party, who urged the imposition of hands as a term of church communion. Newport was then virtually the capital of the Colony, and Governor Jenckes was residing there, for the sake of convenience as a public officer. He wrote to Mr. Brown on the subject, confirming Mr. Walton's view, that laying on of hands "should be no bar to communion with those who have been rightly baptized," and saying that he had been informed by ancient members of this church, that such had been the opinion of Baptists throughout the colony from the earliest times. Mr. Brown perfectly accorded in this sentiment, and strongly remonstrated with Mr. Windsor and his friends against this rigid innovation. As

far as the case admitted, he thus evinced an enlargedness of mind, which it is always pleasing to observe in a christian teacher. This event was among the last acts of his life, for he died the following year, 1732, at the age of sixty-six. His remains were laid in his own burial place, at the north end of the town, where a stone marks his grave.

The year following Mr. Brown's death, Mr. Windsor was ordained to the ministry, and continued in that office twentyfive years. He was born in Providence, in 1677. His ancestors came from Berkshire, in England, and from the town which bears their name, situated on the bank of the Thames. Being settled in the pastorship, his sentiments touching the importance of the imposition of hands of course prevailed, and from that time the practice of the church became more rigid. His ministry was long and successful. Mr. Thomas Burlingham, a native of Cranston, was ordained at the same time with Mr. Windsor, and for a while aided him in his work. But a church having been formed in his native town, Mr. Burlingham resigned his connexion here in order that he might labor there the more effectually.

In 1758, Mr. Windsor died, and the following year his son, Samuel Windsor, Jr., was ordained to the pastoral office. He served the church ten

years, and then requested them to look out for a successor. The number and arduousness of his duties, the claims of his family, and the distance of his residence from the place of worship, were the reasons he assigned for this request. At that time, Rev. Dr. James Manning was officiating as President of Rhode-Island College, which had been commenced in 1765, under his direction, at Warren. It was for several years a matter of doubt where the college would be permanently established, but in 1770, it was determined by the Corporation, that the College edifice "be built in the town of Providence, and there be continued for ever." The removal of Dr. Manning to this town was hailed by the church as a happy event, supposing as they did, that by calling him to be their minister, they would carry into effect Mr. Windsor's wishes. Immediately on his arrival he was requested to occupy the pulpit, and as the first sabbath on which he preached happened to be the day for administering the Lord's Supper, he was invited by Mr. Windsor to participate with the church. Soon after that, suspicions seem to have arisen among some, that Dr. Manning held the imposition of hands rather too loosely, and that he practised it more to accommodate the consciences of others, than to meet the demands of his own. A party of these was soon formed,

with whom Mr. Windsor himself sympathized and acted. Still it was thought by some, that this was only "the ostensible reason" of their dissatisfaction, and that they must have some other one more weighty. This was found in the opposition of Mr. Windsor to the introduction of music in public worship, which it was supposed Dr. Manning favored. On that point the sentiment of the Quakers seems to have prevailed, and singing was discarded, as unauthorized by the New Testament. What diversity of opinion once existed touching a point which seems clear to us, may be inferred from the fact, that in 1691, a work was published in London, by the celebrated Keach, entitled, "The Breach Repaired in God's Worship: or the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, proved to be a holy ordinance of Jesus Christ." In this, the author proceeded to show—what it is to sing—that there can be no proper singing without the voice, that the essence of singing is no more in the heart or spirit than the essence of preaching," and to elucidate other points connected with the subject. It is probable that singing was first laid aside in times of persecution, on account of the danger of practising it, and that afterwards it was difficult to revive every where a due sense of its worth as a divine appointment. In regard to this, the

teachings of the New Testament seem to us to be quite explicit, and that the church is left to select her own songs and modes of singing; yet it is worthy of note, that among the Scotch Presbyterians there has been more opposition to the introduction of metrical hymns, than there ever was in this place to the introduction of sacred music into worship. Such discussions may seem fastidious now, but it must be remembered that after Popery had long made void God's word by man's tradition, the spirit which produced a reformation would be naturally characterized by an extreme and sensitive jealousy touching every practice on which the seal of divine authority was not clearly seen. On this latter point Mr. Windsor strongly insists in his letter to the church touching the controversy before us, though the stress of his argument is applied to the doctrine of laying on of hands. After a series of church meetings, the whole matter was decided in favor of Dr. Manning, who thence became the pastor of this church, while Mr. Windsor afterwards became the founder of a new church in Johnston, which exists to this day.

For three years Dr. Manning preached to great acceptance, but without much visible success in promoting the conversion of men as sinners unto Christ. But in 1774, one of those wide-spread

revivals of religion, with which the American Church has from the first been remarkably blest, pervaded the town of Providence. Its beginning was obscure, but its end was glorious. At a time when there seems not to have been known among the congregation any instance of attention to the nature and necessity of personal religion, two colored women were made the subjects of renewing grace and were united to the church. Soon afterwards others were awakened, and ere long the truths of religion became the subjects of thought and conversation in almost every family. Although before that time there had been a good attendance at church, yet now the sanctuary was found to be by far too small. In the history of this church, no event had occurred since its formation, which we can contemplate with so much pleasure. It is delightful to place ourselves in imagination amidst the scenes of that year, to picture before us the able and faithful preacher who then officiated here as he stood up amidst the large assemblies of the people who thronged around him, listening as they did to the gospel with intense attention as a message from the skies, the very word of God which worketh effectually in them that believe, to mark the lively interest which was kindled in every bosom and beamed from every eye as one after another came forth "on the side of the Lord,"

and professed his faith in public baptism—to contemplate the fresh springs of spiritual life which were then opened in many a house when the family altar was first erected there, and parents and children bowed together, to worship the common Father and Redeemer in spirit and in truth. The wise men and the busy men of this world may deem the subjects of politics and commerce more fitting themes of popular thought and excitement, yet scenes like those, which this town then presented, were such as now awaken "joy in heaven among the angels of God."

As the fruits of that revival, one hundred and four persons were united to the church, a generous spirit was fostered in the community, and fresh encouragements were furnished to those, who had already projected the erection of the house of worship in which we are now assembled. That subject was discussed in February, 1774, when, at a meeting of the society, it was resolved, "that all would heartily unite as one man in all lawful ways and means to promote the good of the society, and particularly attend to and revive the affair of building a meeting-house for the public worship of Almighty God, and to hold Commencement in." It appears from the records that the whole matter was conducted with a high degree of unanimity, zeal,

and promptitude. A committee of two persons, Messrs. Joseph Brown and Jonathan Hammond, were immediately appointed to proceed to Boston, "in order to view the different churches there, to make a memorandum of their several dimensions and forms of architecture." A suitable lot of land was selected and bought, the same month. The draught of the house was made by Joseph Brown, Esq., a member of the church, and Mr. Sumner, who also superintended the building. It was completed and dedicated in May, 1775, on which occasion Dr. Manning preached from Genesis, 28 : 17,—"This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." While we contemplate with pleasure, the spiritual enlargement with which this church was at that time favored, we have reason to congratulate ourselves that those who erected this house of worship for us, have left such a memorial of their religious devotion, and of taste for architectural beauty.*

The same year in which the foundation of this building was laid, a number of persons belonging to the church and congregation, animated with a desire to provide for the support of the ministry of religion, the education of their

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* See Appendix J.

children, and necessary aid to the poor, organized themselves into a body politic for these purposes, and were incorporated by a charter under the title of the Charitable Baptist Society in the town of Providence, in the colony of Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations, in New-England. The charter conferred no power of raising money except by contribution, or subscription; and as the proprietors afterwards agreed to pay an annual assessment on their pews, to raise a regular income for repairs, the powers of the society were so enlarged in 1808, as to enable them to tax their property for this purpose. In 1832, the powers of the society were still further enlarged, so as to enable them to lay assessments on the pews, for the support of the ministry, and for other necessary expenses. This was regarded by some as an infringement on the voluntary principle, but certainly without good reason, since no one was thus taxed except by his own consent.

In looking back to the history of those times, we cannot but regard it as a remarkable and happy event, that this temple was finished and the society so firmly organized, before the commencement of the American Revolution. In 1776, independence was declared, and war proclaimed. In that fearful contest, Rhode-Island acted an important part, and bore her share of

suffering. War is generally regarded as a scourge, on account of the physical evil which it inflicts; but its moral effects are still more to be dreaded. During that of the revolution, the operations of literature and religion were paralyzed, the church was scattered and the college was broken up. The young men of the former were draughted for the army, and the edifice of the latter was used first as barracks for our militia, and then as a hospital for the French army under Count Rochambeau. For the space of seven years Dr. Manning's collegiate exercises were suspended, but he continued to discharge the duties which devolved on him as pastor of the church, and to these he devoted himself with untiring zeal. He was admirably fitted for that crisis. It was a season of great distress, many families left the town, and from the records of the church in 1777, we see that members of it who were possessed of personal and real estate, were not able to avail themselves of its benefits, and were objects of commiseration. It was the delight of Dr. Manning to aid the needy, and to throw the sunshine of christian sympathy around the path of the afflicted. His knowledge of the world, his courtly manners, his christian meekness, combined with great energy of character, enabled him to move at ease with every class of society, and to promote the good of all. In a

recent memoir, which forms an elegant tribute to his memory by one of our fellow-citizens, it is stated, that "he enjoyed the confidence of the general commanding in this department, and in one instance in particular, had all the benevolent feelings of his heart gratified, even at the last moment, after earnest entreaty, by obtaining from General Sullivan, an order of reprieve for three men of the regular army, who were sentenced to death by that inexorable tribunal, a Court Martial. The moment he obtained the order revoking the sentence, he mounted his horse at the General's door, and by pushing him to his utmost speed, arrived at the place of execution at the instant the last act had begun, which was to precipitate them into eternity. With a voice which none could disobey, he commanded the execution to stay, and delivered the General's order to the officer of the guard. The joy of the attending crowd, seemed greater than that of the subjects of mercy; they were called so suddenly to life, from the last verge of death, they did not, for a moment, feel that it was a reality."*

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* John Howland, Esq. President of R. I. His. Soc'y; quoted by Prof. Goddard, in his late memoir of Rev. James Manning, D. D.

The pressing exigencies of that period, urged Dr. Manning to obey the call of his country, in accepting several important trusts in civil life. On a trying occasion, there was committed to him an embassy from this commonwealth to the state of Connecticut, the object of which he accomplished most successfully. In 1786, he was appointed to represent the State of Rhode-Island in the Congress of the United States, where it was aptly said of him that he "held the pen of a ready writer," and was master of all the great questions before the House. In 1788, he attended, as a visiter, the Convention which met in Boston for ratifying the Constitution, where, "on the last day of the session, before the final question was taken, Governor Hancock, the President, invited him to close the solemn convocation with thanksgiving and prayer. Dr. Manning, though, as Dr. Waterhouse thinks, taken by surprise, immediately dropped on his knees, and poured out his heart in a strain of exalted patriotism and fervid devotion, which awakened in the assembly a mingled sentiment of admiration and awe." The impression which he made must have been extraordinary, for it appears from the statement of Dr. Waterhouse, who dined in a large company after the adjournment, that Dr. Manning became the theme of general conversation, and had not Dr.

Stillman at that time been filling a very wide sphere with remarkable energy and success, a church would have been built in Boston for Dr. Manning's acceptance.*

When the war was over, and the members of the church who had been separated were restored to each other, two church meetings were held, one in Providence, the other in Pawtucket, in order to renew their solemn covenant to walk together in the commands and ordinances of the Lord. Mingled with the joy of peace, there was a mournful recollection of that happy religious progress which the war had arrested, and that "bloom of possession which had faded away." Amidst the general thanksgivings for political quiet, the church gathered around the altar of the Lord, and dedicated themselves to him afresh.

When the affairs of the College began to revive, Dr. Manning felt that the number of his duties and his cares were too great for him. On that account, in 1791, he resigned his pastoral office, and preached his farewell sermon in April of that year. His relation to the church had been an endearing one, and while they all wept at that parting scene, they little thought how soon they would be called to pay the last

* Memoir of Manning by Professor Goddard, p. 12.

sad tribute of affection and friendship at his tomb. Two months after that time, while engaged in family worship, he fell in a fit of apoplexy, in which he remained for six days, almost unconscious of any thing, and then expired. He was aged fiftythree years, and if, like his friend, Dr. Stillman, whom he much resembled in character, he had prayed that he might not outlive his usefulness, that prayer was truly fulfilled in the time and manner of his death.

A glance at the character of Dr. Manning, and of the eventful times in which he lived, is adapted to awaken in the mind a pleasing sense of that wise adaptation of means to ends, which may be traced more or less in all the workings of that holy Providence which led him hither, to present an impressive view of the great truth which Cowper felt when he said,

> God gives to every man
> The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
> That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
> Just in the niche he was ordained to fill.

He was born in Elizabethtown, N. J., October 22d, 1738, graduated at Princeton College in 1762, with the highest honors of his class, and having preached a short time at Morristown, became a resident of Rhode-Island in 1763.

Here he has left many memorials of a useful life, and a name that will be always fragrant.

Rev. Jonathan Maxcy, D. D. was the successor of Dr. Manning in the ministry. A little before the death of the latter, young Maxcy was licensed by the church to preach, having graduated three years before, at the age of nineteen years. The following year he was ordained to the pastorship, and appointed Professor of Divinity in the College. The next year, 1792, he succeeded Dr. Manning in the Presidency. Not long after, he resigned the pastorship of the church, and in 1802, accepted the Presidentship of Union College at Schenectady, N. Y. He remained there only two years, and then removed to Columbia, S. C., having been elected President of South-Carolina College. Over that institution he presided sixteen years, until the time of his death, in 1820. He was an accomplished scholar, an efficient instructer, and an eloquent preacher. His writings breathe the spirit of a pure christianity, and indicate that he was both a sound theologian, and a clear reasoner. One of the most lucid exhibitions which we have ever seen of the doctrine of the atonement, came from his pen, and among the theological articles which the discussions of his day called forth, few productions have done more to meet the difficulties,

and determine the opinions of young inquirers.

We come now to speak of the ministry of one, whose form and features seem to be intimately associated with this place in the recollections of many of us, and whose very voice seems still to linger around these walls. For thirtysix years, the Rev. Stephen Gano went in and out before this people as their pastor, and with a character "known and read of all men" commanded the esteem of all, as a man, a christian and a minister. It is always pleasing to speak of the life of any individual, to the very community in whose midst he lived, when all accord in the acknowledgment of his moral worth, and are glad to do him honor; but especially is it a grateful thing to do so in the case of one who was set as a teacher and guide of the people, when those who knew him best esteemed him most, confessed that he practised what he preached, and adorned the doctrine of God in all things. Such a man was Dr. Gano, who though he passed the greater part of his manhood in this place, from first to last maintained that beautiful consistency, that dignity of life and manners, which when calmly surveyed in retrospect, is fitted deeply to impress the heart with a sense of the reality and the power of religion.

Mr. Gano, was born in the city of New-York, December 25th, 1762. His father was the Rev. John Gano, for many years pastor of the First Baptist Church of that city. As his name imports, he was of French extraction, being descended from a family of Huguenots, who, with many others, fled from the dominions of Charles IX, after the revocation of the edict of Nantz, in 1699. They obtained lands of the English near New-York, settled a township, and called it New-Rochelle, in honor of that city which was the strong hold of Protestantism in their father-land.

It was the intention of Mr. Gano's father, that his son should pursue a collegiate course of education, under the direction of his uncle, Dr. Manning. But when the war of the Revolution broke up the college, his attention was diverted to the study of medicine, which he pursued with Dr. Stites, a maternal uncle, in New-Jersey. The father being a chaplain in the American service, the son became connected with it as a surgeon, and on the return of peace, practised medicine in his native State. At that time, in all his habits and associations, he was far from giving any promise of ever becoming a religious man. But in regard to that, all human reasonings were baffled by the power of Him who is able to save to the uttermost; and the

truth that man is saved by sovereign grace, was by his own conversion so displayed to his mind, as to make an impression that could never be erased.

Soon after this great spiritual change, although his profession opened before him a fair path to wealth, his heart turned towards the christian ministry. At the age of twentythree he was ordained by the first Baptist church in New-York. He was soon zealously employed as a preacher at Hudson, in his native State, and in 1792, was invited by this church to preach first as a candidate, and afterwards was cordially received as a pastor. At that period the town was just beginning to rise from its prostration by the war, and the church embraced only one hundred and sixtyfive members. It is pleasing to observe, however, that within the sphere of his influence the revival of religion was concomitant with the revival of commerce, and that the early years of his ministry were brightened with remarkable success. During the thirtysix years of his pastorship, he was blessed with nine of those auspicious seasons which we denominate revivals of religion, in each of which the number of the church was much enlarged, and the pulse of piety greatly strengthed. The first of these was in 1793, and the last in 1820, when the number of the church amounted to 648, of

whom 147 were baptized that year. Doubtless there are many here who feel that memory loves to linger around those sacred scenes, to recal those happy seasons when the river side became a place "where prayer was wont to be made," and when under the guidance of this venerable servant of the Lord, youth, and manhood, and decrepid age, hastened together, to yield themselves up to God in the appointed symbol of self-consecration. Into the spirit of such occasions Dr. Gano entered with all the energy of his heart; never did he seem to be more happy and impressive, and in respect to them, few ministers have had their warmest desires more largely gratified.

The destitution of preachers which followed the Revolutionary War was very great, and the demand for the preaching of the gospel in this neighborhood and commonwealth was quite urgent. To this exigency, Dr. Gano was admirably fitted. Having an athletic frame, great muscular energy, strength of voice, and much interested in making excursions of a missionary character, he had reason to believe that many seals of his ministry were scattered over a wide extent of country, and doubtless many such will appear at last as stars in his crown of rejoicing.

With those qualities which rendered Dr. Gano's preaching so acceptable to the great mass

of the people, who indeed "heard him gladly," there was combined a sound practical judgment, a power of discriminating character, and a steady self-command, which rendered him weighty in counsel, and a most useful member of various ecclesiastical bodies. For nineteen years in succession, he presided at the meetings of the Warren Association, whose members felt, when they first met without him, that a strange and melancholy chasm had been made among them, and that they had lost the aid of a beloved and venerable father. The impression of his character upon the younger ministry around him, was indeed a most happy one; for they saw in him the rare combination of a strict integrity in maintaining his own opinions, with great enlargedness of heart regarding those who differed from him. He was always courteous without compromising truth, and zealous without bigotry. Of the liberality which arises from indifference to religious sentiment, he knew nothing; that which springs from christian love, which embraces in spiritual fellowship "all who hold the Head, even Christ," he possessed an ample measure. Dignified without affectation, and manly without sternness, his meekness most distinguished him, and his "gentleness made him great."

The manner of Dr. Gano's death, was quite a contrast to that of his uncle and predecessor, Dr. Manning. Both were ripe for heaven, but the latter was called suddenly there, while the former was led slowly through the dark valley. The fatal sickness of the latter was passed in a state of insensibility; the former lingered many days in exquisite pain. The latter could say but little of the state of his mind or the prospects before him; the former could proclaim the high praises of God amidst protracted agonies. His disease was described by his physician, Dr. Levi Wheaton, as a dropsy of the chest, and by a post mortem examination, his lungs were found inundated and compressed to an extraordinary degree. For nearly seven months, from January 26th to August 18th, it made painful progress. The following note occurs in his memoranda, under date of January 27th. Had a severe attack of my breast complaint last night, after I had retired; was obliged to bleed myself copiously, and obtained relief. Oh, blessed God! give me an habitual preparation to meet the pale messenger, whenever he comes.

During the three succeeding months, he preached occasionally. His last sermon was delivered on the 27th of April, from Romans 5: 4, on the subject of christian experience. Twice after that day he was permitted to attend the

sanctuary, and then for three months more, to use his own language, wearisome days and nights were appointed to him. "But I bless God," said he, "I feel perfectly willing to have it just as it is. I have resigned myself into his hands, knowing he will not inflict one pain too much." His extraordinary fortitude seemed to spring directly from his faith in God, which was at all times equal to the emergency. I remember well the emphasis with which a friend who visited him in his sickness, and had just come from his bed-side, expressed the sentiment, that he had never seen such a lamb-like, unmurmuring sufferer, amidst pains so exquisite.

During this period, his mind was sustained by meditations of an elevated and cheering character, and he found some hours for reading a few favorite books, such as Fuller's Life of Pearce, and Jay's Lectures. "This" said he, "is the kind of reading which my soul loves." No book suited him then, which did not tend to guide his mind to the cross of Christ. When visited by one of his aged friends, Deacon Joseph Martin, an officer of the church, he said with much emphasis amidst great weakness, "I am glad to have an opportunity to express to you that the doctrine of the Deity of Jesus Christ is my support—it is the rock on which my soul rests in the last hour." "Ah, Doctor," was the reply,

"you still hold to that." "That doctrine holds me," said he, "or I should sink."

On the afternoon of Sunday, the 17th of August, his mind was filled with unusual joy and transport. Heaven broke upon his sight. "Not a cloud," he said, "but all clear sunshine. I have been trying to find a dark spot, but all is bright." I feel filled with God and Christ."

> Oh if my Lord would come and meet,
> My soul would stretch her wings in haste,
> Fly fearless through death's iron gate,
> Nor feel the terrors as she passed.

His desire was realized on the following afternoon, Monday, August 18th, 1828. On August 20th, a funeral discourse was delivered by Rev. Dr. Sharp, of Boston, from Proverbs 10: 7,—"The memory of the just is blessed."

After the death of Dr. Gano, the church remained more than a year and a half without a pastor. They then united in a call to Rev. Robert Everett Pattison, who had been Professor of Mathematics at Waterville College, but was at that time pastor of the second Baptist Church in Salem. The invitation was accepted, and he was settled March 21st, 1830. He remained pastor of the church more than six years, during which time the connexion between them became increasingly happy. Under his ministry

a fresh impulse was given to the progress of religion, and those interests of the church and society which had languished during the declining days of Dr. Gano, and while the church had been destitute of a pastor. After the arduous labors of a year, he was pleased to observe a renewed attention to religion gradually extending itself, and before he resigned his charge, he had baptized two hundred and three individuals into the name of Christ.

His departure from this place was rendered necessary by his declining health. His resignation of the pastoral office was accepted August 11, 1836. He then entered upon a new sphere of duties, which he yet fills with renovated energy and with gratifying success.

In looking back upon the history of this church from its formation to the present time, we cannot but feel that we are loudly called upon to-day, to bow our heads in solemn worship, before the Lord, while in this temple of our solemnities, we remember how great things he hath wrought for us. We are assembled near the spot, where our founder lifted up his voice in words of praise, that he had passed through the great and terrible wilderness, and had found at last the promised land. Well may we catch the same notes of thanksgiving, well may we cry in the words of the ancient patriarch touching his once exiled

son, "blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious things of the earth and the fullness thereof, for the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush, and for the blessing which came upon the head of his servant, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren." Add your testimony to his this day, that God's providence is rich, his judgments deep, his promises sure; for I call you to record that the hopes of that venerable pilgrim have fully been realized, and not one thing hath failed of all that he saw by the eye of faith. Here freedom has been established, religion enshrined, persecution condemned; here civil order and the right of private judgment have met together, and thus righteousness and peace have embraced each other.

It is a matter of just and special congratulation too, that this church, is united in maintaining the same great doctrines which were professed on the day of its formation. Roger Williams was celebrated in his day, as a preacher of the very principles of evangelical religion which were the distinguishing doctrines of those great reformers, Luther and Calvin, and which, in another century shone forth with such effulgence in the preaching of Whitefield. They

have been sustained by no state patronage, they have not even been embodied in a creed, but subjected to free discussion, and received as the doctrines of the bible, they have held their sway simply by their moral power. They have endured every trial, are still retained amongst us, and loved as well as ever. Standing as she does on the ground of her early faith, while the very churches which once censured her freedom as the prolific source of every error have gone far from what they then called orthodoxy, she is prepared from the experience of two centuries, to urge afresh upon the whole professing church of Christ, this great lesson, that whatever truth may be, she needs not to be guarded by the edicts of states, or the set phrase of synodical articles, but would fain shine by her own pure light, and be permitted to have free course that she may glorify herself.

While by the light of history, we look around upon the present state of the world, a few facts replete with meaning, connected with important practical lessons, force themselves upon our attention.

I. The success of the principle which was embodied in the constitution of this church. That principle, reduced to its simplest expression, is, that the christian dispensation acknowledges no tie which can unite a human being to

the visible kingdom of God on earth, except a voluntary profession of faith in Christ. This involves as an essential part of true christianity, the idea of religious liberty. No one can be *forced* to a voluntary profession, to a cheerful obedience. Hence results the sentiment, that the magistrate has no right to interfere in the affairs of conscience—hence the disconnexion of the church and the state. This too, of course, excludes infant baptism from any place in the present dispensation, which is adapted only to intelligent, free, responsible beings. The first of these necessary consequents, the first to take full possession of the mind of Williams, has been the first to triumph in this country. Its progress has been slow, but sure. It has advanced amidst mighty strugglings. In 1638, a man was fined in Massachusetts, for writing against the law for the support of religion, and another for reading it.* In 1656, the United Colonies joined in recommending to the courts, to pass laws forbidding the Quakers to enter within their jurisdiction.† Rhode-Island refused to comply, and even appealed to England for aid to enable her to carry out the principles of her charter. In New-York, Episcopacy was estab-

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* Mass. His. Coll.

† Trumbull's History of Connecticut.

lished in the four first counties, where all dissenters were obliged to pay to the established clergy, except so far as the Dutch churches, by virtue of an original stipulation, gained an exemption.*

In Carolina and Georgia the support of religion was enforced by law,† and even in Maryland, more liberal than they, liberty was so defined that some who are called christians, could not hold offices of trust,‡ and it was enacted that "Any one speaking reproachfully against the Blessed Virgin or the Apostles, shall be fined five pounds."§ In 1659-62-93, the Assembly of Virginia, made it penal in parents, to refuse to have their children baptized.‖ The very year when measures were commenced for the erection of this house, the Baptist Association of Virginia, appointed a day of fasting, as they said, "to pray for our poor blind persecutors, and for the releasement of our brethren."¶ In that State their desires were remarkably accomplished. Their influence as a people has been

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* Dr. Styles's Discourse on Christian Union. Boston, 1761.

† Dr. Styles's Disc.

‡ Bancroft, I, p. 276.

§ Chalmer's Pol. Ann. I, 218.

‖ Jefferson's Notes, p. 229.

¶ Dr. Semple's History of the Baptists in Virginia.

widely felt on this question there, and we have the testimony of Washington in one of his letters, that the denomination "have been throughout America, uniformly and almost unanimously, the firm friends of civil liberty, and the persevering promoters of our glorious revolution."* The same testimony has been reiterated by Jefferson, who brought all the energy of his mind to co-operate with them in promoting a principle which was with him merely an element of his political philosophy, but which was with them a primary doctrine of religious belief.

It was not until 1811, that true religious liberty began to be known in Massachusetts. Before that period, all were taxed to support the established order, and an association was formed among the Baptists to protect their members from *illegal* oppression. At that time, the law was so modified as to allow every man to pay his tax for the support of that worship which he chose to attend, provided that a certificate of his intention were duly filed with the town clerk. For that change, the efforts of Backus, Leland,† Baldwin, and others, had long been preparing the way. But it was not till 1834, that the last political link which united the church and the

* Benedict, II, 481.

† Benedict, II, 267, 482.

state was destroyed, and every man was left free to pay much or little, any thing or nothing, for the support of religion. The bill to that effect was passed several times in the House of Representatives, but was lost in the Senate, till at last being referred directly to the people, it was carried at the ballot-boxes by an immense majority. The legal support of religion was pleaded for on the same ground of state necessity as that of common education; but since that day religion has not declined, and no act has been more popular than the increase of the tax for secular education. It has been lately said by one of her most gifted sons, "Massachusetts may blush, that the Catholic colony of Lord Baltimore, and the Quaker, the blameless Quaker Colony of Penn, were originally founded on the principles of christian right, long before she felt or acknowledged them."*

We have remarked, that from the great principle which distinguishes us as a people, namely, that a voluntary profession of faith is the only tie which can rightfully connect a human being with Christ's visible kingdom, it follows that infant baptism has no place under the Christian dispensation. As we understand it, coming as it is said in the place of circumcision, it is a part

* Judge Story's Centennial Address, p. 57.

of Judaism and not of Christianity. In connexion with the spread of religious liberty, we may well marvel that this other doctrine is now so widely extended; that though opposed at first by wisdom, learning, and power, it now numbers a larger body of supporters than any one of the denominations opposed to it.* This is indeed no proof of its truth; but the fact of its success in this country, shows its adaptation to take hold of the popular mind, and to win its way by merely moral force to universal respect, and a general reception. By its own inward energy, only, would we wish it to succeed; God forbid that it should ever gain wide conquests in any other way. What it has done, however, shows it to possess great moral strength, and makes it worthy of the study of every inquiring mind. This will lead us to consider,

II. What are the chief elements of its power? Where lies the secret of its success? We answer: First, In its simplicity.--It is easily understood, very plain, as well as exceedingly obvious. It is not necessarily the result of long theological or philosophical reasonings, but meets the eye of the inquirer on the very surface of the New Testament. Those, therefore, who have not

* American Almanac, 1839.

yielded fully to it, have felt themselves pressed with many difficulties.—Secondly, In its harmony with a christian's first convictions of the spirituality of religion. When a man first feels that the kingdom of God is within him, that voluntary faith is the only bond which can connect him with Christ's *invisible* kingdom, then the doctrine that a voluntary profession of faith is the only tie which can unite him with the outward church, strikes in with the deepest emotions of his soul. His heart responds to the truth, that in regard to his outward as well as his inward relations to christianity, "old things have passed away, and all things have become new." Thirdly, In the extent and importance of its bearings.—It is at once seen to produce the most far-reaching consequences. The principle that personal faith is the only bond of union with the church, involves the idea of the spiritual nature of christianity, the voluntary character of the christian dispensation, and destroys the possibility of religious persecution. How can persecution exist where this principle gains sway? There is no point on which outward force can operate; it hath no object at which to aim. Men must of necessity be left to themselves, in order that they may freely "choose whom they will serve." It strikes an effective blow at all church-establishments, at

all state-patronage of religion. It produces religious liberty, not on the ground of expediency, but demands it as a *necessary condition* of the progress of true christianity. It stands forth in direct contrast to that theory of church constitution, defended ably by that great writer who is well designated, "the judicious Hooker." "We hold," says he, "that seeing there is not any man of the Church of England, but the same man is also a member of the commonwealth, nor any member of the commonwealth who is not also of the Church of England; therefore, as in a figure triangle, the base doth differ from the sides thereof, and yet one and the selfsame line is both a base and also a side—a side simply, a base if it chance to be the bottom and underlie the rest; so, albeit properties and actions of one do cause the name of a commonwealth, qualities and functions of another sort, the name of a church to be given to a multitude, yet one and the selfsame multitude may in such sort be both. Nay, it is so with us, that no one pertaining to the one can be denied also of the other." "Our state is, according to the pattern of God's own elect people; which was not part of them, the church of God; but the selfsame people, whole and entire, were both under one chief Governor, on whose supreme authority they did all depend." If Pædo-Baptism would fairly maintain

the relative position which once belonged to the rite of circumcision, it must acknowledge this representation of the ecclesiastical polity to be just and true.

Now the great principle of the Baptists derives its power, from its standing forth in its simplicity, clearness and integrity, as the antagonist of this and every theory from which church establishments arise. It declares at the outset, that no human being can be born into the christian church, or be baptized into it except on a voluntary profession of faith. Thence, it asserts that no creed can be enforced by law, that the magistrate has no right whatever to interfere in matters purely spiritual. In regard to this point, the Baptists have uniformly in ages past, taken higher ground than any sect of Protestants. The latter in their plea for religious liberty, have generally been content to ask or demand toleration ; the former have declared it to be a violation of the spirit of christianity for any human power to assume the *right to tolerate.* The latter have shown in practice, that a church establishment may be rendered compatible with their systems ; the former have proved that their fundamental principle is the set antagonist of an established religion. The latter coming out from the bosom of the Romish Church, protested

against her corruptions of doctrine, not against her union with the state; the former spoke of her as anti-christian on account of that one feature. The former and the latter hold many sentiments of vital worth in common, sufficient to form the basis of a true spiritual fellowship; but in regard to the outward constitution of the church, the latter retain, as we think, an element of Judaism, with which the creed of the former can never coalesce.

And while we lament that this difference yet exists, we feel bound to adhere to it from a sense of duty to God, from loyalty to truth, and for the welfare of the world. Yes, we say for the welfare of the world; for we believe that the element of power which has been so much dreaded on the continent of Europe, under the name of Anabaptism, is the very thing which is needed for the reformation of Christendom. The evils which exist in the Protestant churches of the continent, the moral torpor, the cold formality, the persecuting spirit, arise mainly from the establishment of a state-religion, from the prevalent idea, as Locke expresses it, "that a man can inherit his religion as he does his lands." Alas! how little is gained in such a case by the battle of mitre against mitre, of one hierarchy against another, of the triumph of

protestantism over catholicity! Within the pale of either, doubtless, there are pious persons, who, amidst the rubbish of the creeds, cull out the essential elements of the christian faith, practise them in their life, and find their way to heaven. But the tendency of that order of things under which they live, is to lead the great mass to substitute the outward service of christianity for its inward spirit, the form for the power, the sign for the thing signified. Some simple powerful principle is needed, which can be easily apprehended by the multitude, and in its working heave from its very base this mighty fabric of secular corruption. Such is the principle of which we speak, which we believe will be in God's hand as "a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth, to thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff." All ages have proved its power. It glowed in the heart of Arnold of Brescia, when by his words all Rome was inspired to rise and dethrone the Pope. It reigned in the bosoms of the Waldenses, when they were anathematized by the priesthood, harassed by inquisitors, driven from their homes amidst the snows of winter, scattered through Bohemia, Poland, Lithuania, Provence, the caverns of the neighboring Alps, and yet remained faithful unto

death. It quickened the spirit of Milton, when he cried—

> Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
> Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
> Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
> When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
> Forget not; in thy book record their groans
> Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
> Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
> Mother and infant down the rocks. Their moans
> The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
> To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
> O'er all th' Italian fields where still doth sway
> A triple tyrant; that from these may grow
> A hundred fold, who having learned thy way,
> Early may fly the Babylonian wo!

It kindled in his heart a pure devotion, when, having returned from Italy to take part in the contest for freedom at home, he breathed his prayer to Heaven, saying, "Thou, therefore, that sitst in light and glory unapproachable, Parent of angels and men! next, Thee I implore Omnipotent King, Redeemer of that lost remnant, whose nature thou didst assume; ineffable and everlasting Love! And thou, the third subsistence of divine Infinitude, Illuminating Spirit, the joy and solace of created things, One tri-personal Godhead, look upon this thy poor and almost spent and expiring church, leave her not thus a prey to these importunate wolves that wait and think long till

they devour thy tender flock, these wild boars that have broke into thy vineyard, and left the print of their polluting hoofs on the souls of thy servants! O let them not bring about their damned designs that stand now at the entrance of the bottomless pit, expecting the watchword, to open and let out those dreadful locusts and scorpions, to reinvolve us in that pitchy cloud of infernal darkness, where we shall never more see the sun of thy truth again, never hope for the cheerful dawn, nor hear the bird of morning sing!"* We believe it is a principle which will be caught by other mighty minds, and diffuse its inspiring energy through coming generations, till at last the church shall stand forth in the beauty of her pristine independence, and though our outward order may not be uniformly observed, the victories of a spiritual and apostolic christianity shall be hailed and celebrated through the nations, on whom the sun of righteousness will then have arisen with healing in his beams.

III. Although I have occupied so much time in looking back upon the annals of the past, yet I cannot forbear ere I close, to call upon you, in view of the lessons of history and our position

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* Milton's prose works, p. 933.

in the world, to feel the necessity of our cultivating as a people the *elements of future progress.* It would be ruinous to any community to count themselves already to have attained, or to be already perfect. The spiritual nature of christianity and the possession of liberty, urge us alike to put forth all our moral might in doing good, promoting virtue, in exemplifying and extending the influence of pure religion. Liberty is a sacred trust, a gift of heaven, and he who has it, may well "rejoice with trembling," lest he prove unfaithful to it. Liberty is only a means of good; spiritual progress is the end to which it stands properly related, and he who loses sight of this connexion, may err as fatally in idolizing liberty as others have erred in idolizing uniformity. Liberty only removes the burdens with which the human spirit has been heavy laden, and gives all the powers of the mind and the affections of the heart free play; it does not hold forth the grand and ultimate object of exertion. This, Christianity holds forth, when she bids us labor to promote the good of mankind, the true dignity of the church, and the honor of him who hath called us to glory and virtue.

In "reaching forth to things which are before," we are loudly called upon by the signs of the times which utter the voice of Providence, to be zealous in the diffusion of light and knowledge

among ourselves and around us. To set a high standard of *secular and christian education* for our youth, and to furnish every facility to our rising ministers for the cultivation of knowledge, should be considered not only as a wise policy, but an imperative duty. To the first object, the whole public are becoming more and more alive; the second demands of us a more concentrated attention. In pursuing it, the conduct of our ancestors in England, may shed light upon our way. As soon as sufficient liberty was allowed them for open and efficient organization, a Baptist convention in London, called upon all the churches to raise a general fund for a twofold purpose; first, to aid poor churches, and secondly, "to assist those who may be disposed for study, have an inviting gift, and are sound in fundamentals, in attaining to the knowledge of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages." As early as 1689, measures were taken to carry this design into effect, and while we rejoice to see that from their deep poverty "the riches of their liberality abounded," we would fain open our eyes and hearts to the influence of such an example.

It becomes us too, to cherish in a higher degree than ever, the *missionary spirit.* As it exists in a free and enlightened mind, it is another name for christian philanthropy. It

was the glory of the first age of christianity, and I trust that in future times, it will appear to have been the glory of the present century. In ages past, establishments of religion have tended to destroy it, not only because they corrupted the church, but because, from its very nature, an established church is *anti-missionary.* Where a state directs ecclesiastical affairs, its relation to other states, forbids much agency in the spread of religion, because religion then assumes a national and political aspect. However pure may be the faith of the church, and however desirous she may be to extend it, she is crippled by such a connexion. After this country became independent of England, the English Church could not even consecrate bishops for America, until an act of Parliament had given her liberty to do so. Thence, Dr. Provost and Dr. White, went over to England, "and on the 4th of February, 1787, were consecrated *according to an act of Parliament*, by Dr. Moore, Archbishop of Canterbury.* Since that day, the Episcopal church in this land has become, as a church, devoted to the cause of missions, and appears in a new and noble attitude, which she could never have assumed had not the formal bond between her and the church of England been broken.

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* Caswell's America and the American Church.

In no period since the times of the apostles, have christians been urged by stronger motives to engage in the work of missions, than are those of the present day. What numerous doors are open! what facilities are furnished for spreading knowledge! what means of multiplying power! what wide and inviting fields are ready for the harvest! and what a remarkable combination of events, have roused our church at large, to engage in the enterprise! In the year 1807, a young man left the University of this city, professedly a Deist. Having been induced to commence a resolute examination of the evidences of christianity, his conversion was the consequence. Longing then to spread the gospel in some Pagan land, he sailed for India on his heavenly errand. While on his way, being earnestly engaged in studying the bible, prayerfully and anew, in order to ascertain the will of God, as to the proper mode of building up the church on heathen ground, he was led to embrace our doctrines touching the constitution of the church. He then appealed to us for co-operation. The church heard the call, concerted measures for his support, and sent him many helpers. Since then she has lifted up her eyes, looked upon the world as the field of her labor, and is seeking to send broadcast over it the good seed of the word. Mr. Judson, our first missionary, still

lives, surrounded with many converts and fellow-workers, and our Board of Missions have now under their care, 66 stations. Of these 15 are among the Indian tribes of America, 16 in Europe, 2 in Africa, and 33 in Asia. These embrace 45 churches containing 2000 members, 68 schools containing 1500 pupils, and there are connected with them 106 missionaries and assistants, 43 of whom are preachers.

Important, however, as is missionary zeal springing from love to truth and goodness, we are called upon by the voice of the Divine Spirit, the voice of his word, and the voice of the universal church, to cherish in connexion with it, an enlarged and cordial spirit of *christian union.* It is not a documentary union of sects of which we speak, which in the present state of the world is not practicable, and which if it were, would accomplish but little good. It is not any visible fellowship produced by laying our scruples of conscience as a sacrifice on the altar of uniformity. It is a union of spirit; that which Jesus desired that his followers might so exhibit as to make an impression on the world of the holy power of his religion; that which he inculcated when he rebuked his disciples for opposing one, who did good in his name without being united to their visible association. Notwithstanding the collisions of ecclesiastical

bodies, many signs indicate that the hearts of christians at large, are throbbing with desire for a holier and firmer union than has heretofore existed. It is breathed more often from the lips of prayer, it is uttered from the pulpit, proclaimed by the press, and now and then developed in some new "plan of union." It is an auspicious omen. It is a mark of progress. It is a natural result of the freedom of religion. It might justly be expected, where truth "is not bound," where discussion has full scope, that in process of time there would be diffused among christians a more accurate knowledge of each other's position, and that thence there would be awakened a deeper sense of those inward affinities which are far stronger bonds than any outward formularies. For ourselves we have no new plan of union to propose. We believe in none. But we have firm faith in the workings of a free christianity to produce that enlargedness of heart, that regard for the right of private judgment, that respect for mental independence, that candor, courtesy, and love of truth, from which a real and enduring union will arise. We cannot legislate it into being. Only let us as christians develope in action the principles that are common to us, think more of our points of agreement than of difference, respect each other's liberty, declare our opinions frankly and

fraternally, and "*as far as we have attained* walk by the same rule and mind the same thing," and then will the Saviour's prayer for the oneness of the faithful already have been fulfilled in us, and the elements of a union will have begun to germinate which will expand into a more beauteous bloom, and ripen into richer harvests of enduring fruit, in proportion to the increase of light, the progress of society, and the advance of a christian civilization.

Full as we are of hope for the future, confident that goodness rules the universe, that the Almighty is carrying forward a profound plan to a glorious issue, which shall make known even in heavenly places his manifold wisdom, it is a natural wish that we could live to see the effects of various causes now at work, on the destinies of men. At such a moment we are touched with a fresh and vivid sense of the shortness of life. How brief the space allotted to us here! Yet the wish to live, though it spring from an interest in the fortunes of our race, pertains to the weakness and the childhood of our nature, not to its manly wisdom. The religion of Christ discloses to us higher relations and brighter scenes than those which engage us now, in which, however, our sympathies with mankind shall not cease. We are following fast in the track of departed generations. Our destinies

will soon be linked with those, whose names we have celebrated, whose actions we have praised or censured, and who are now reaping the results of those elements of weal or wo, which were here at work in the formation of their character. The thought is apt to cast over the soul a shade of melancholy, which, however, prepares it to feel the truth, that it should be our great care on earth to leave some substantial proof that we have not lived in vain, that thus each of us, here and hereafter,

> "An angel's happiness may know;
> May bless the earth while in the world above.
> The good begun by us shall onward flow,
> In many a branching stream, and wider grow."

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Note A.—Page 47.

Baillie's letters furnish ample proof of the aversion which the Presbyterian party cherished against a toleration of other sects. Speaking as one of the Westminster Assembly, he says, "we have begun a business of great consequence. In the time of this anarchy, the divisions of the people do much increase; the Independent party grows, but the Anabaptists more." "A mighty faction is arisen to prefer liberty of conscience for all sects." He (John Godwin) is a bitter enemy to Presbytery, and is openly for a full liberty of conscience to all sects, even Turks, Jews, Papists. This way is very pleasant to many men. That faction increases mightily in number, hopes, and pride; but if it pleases God to give us good news from York, we will tell them more of our minds."—[Letters II, 14-15.]

"Our next work is, to give our advice what to do for suppressing of Anabaptists, Antinomians, and other sectaries. This will be hard work; yet so much as concerns us, will be quickly despatched; I hope in one session."—[II, 55.]

Note B.—Page 47.

John Tombes, B. D., was one of the most learned theologians and eloquent preachers of England in the seventeenth century. He was born at Bewdly, in Worcestershire, in 1603, was educated at Oxford, and when only twentyone years of age, was appointed Catechetical Lecturer at Magdalen Hall. He continued to be employed at the University about seven years, and then was settled in the parish of Lemster. First amongst those who sought a reformation of the church, he preached a sermon on that subject, which was printed by an order of the House of Commons. On this account much opposition was excited against him, so that when the civil war commenced, some of the king's forces coming into his neighborhood, he was driven from his home and plundered of all his property.

He fled to Bristol, and was well received. Through the kindness of General Fiennes, who commanded there, he became minister of the parish of All-Saints, in that city. But in 1643, Bristol having been taken by the king's party, Mr. Tombes was again driven from his home, and with difficulty escaped to London.

While residing in London, his sentiments on the subject of baptism became fully matured. He had commenced the investigation of the subject at Oxford, and there became satisfied that every passage of scripture quoted in favor of infant baptism is invalid, except one. That one was, I. Cor. 7 : 14. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." But after

reasoning with one of the Baptists at Bristol, and reading the comments of Camerarius, Musculus, Melancthon, and Beza, on the passage, he gave it up entirely.

He then called together several of the London ministers, told them of his difficulties, and asked them if they could help him. The question he proposed, was, "what scripture is there for infant baptism?" He received no satisfactory answer.

When the Westminster assembly of divines met in London, for the avowed purpose of reforming religion in England and Scotland, Mr. Tombes was informed by one of them, that a committee had been appointed to consider the subject of infant baptism. He immediately drew up in Latin his reasons for doubting of the lawfulness of that practice, and sent them to Mr. Whitaker, the chairman of the committee, expressing the wish that they would either remove his objections, or extend their reform to that ordinance. They did neither of these, but in the end, passed a vote censuring those who should deny baptism to infants, or dispute on that subject.

About four years after that, he published his treatise against infant baptism, and his *examen* of Mr. Marshal's sermon, in both of which he exhibited extensive learning and diligent research.

At length the people of Bewdly, his native town, called him to be their minister. While there, he continued to discuss the subject of infant baptism, and seeing at last no prospect of a reformation in the established church on this point, he was baptized on a profession of his faith, and gathered a separate church, although he continued to occupy the parish pulpit.

While residing at Bewdly, he had a public discussion with Baxter, on the subject of baptism, in relation to which it is said by Anthony Wood, (in his Athenæ Oxonienses, being "an exact account of all the writers and bishops who have had their education at the University of Oxford from the year 1500 to 1600,") "that all scholars there and present, who knew the way of disputing and managing arguments, did conclude that Tombes got the better of Baxter by far."*

Mr. Tombes was a powerful writer. Several of his sermons adapted to the times, were printed by order of Parliament. He enjoyed the esteem of Bishop Sanderson and also of Bishop Barlow. Dr. Calamy, in his Life of Baxter, speaking of Mr. Tombes, says of him, "Whom all the world must own to have been a very considerable man and an excellent scholar, how disinclined soever they may be to his particular opinions." The catalogue of his works contains the titles of twentyeight volumes. Having heard that the Baptists were persecuted in Massachusetts, he sent his examen of Marshall's sermon to the ministers, with the following letter:

To all the Elders of the Churches of Christ in New-England, to the Pastor and Teacher of the Church of God at Boston, there, present.

Reverend Brethren,

Understanding that there is some disquiet in your churches about Pædobaptism, and being moved by some that honor you much in the Lord, and desire

* Athen. Oxon. vol. III, p. 1063—quoted in Orme's Life of Baxter, II, p. 248.

your comfortable account at the day of Christ, that I would yield that a copy of my examen of Master Marshall his sermon of infant baptism might be transcribed to be sent to you; I have consented thereto, and do commend it to your examination, in like manner, as you may perceive by the reading of it, I did to Master Marshall. Not doubting but that you will, as in God's presence, and accountable to Christ Jesus weigh the thing; remembering that [saying] of our Lord Christ, John 7 : 24, *Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.* To the blessing of him who is your God and our God, your judge and our judge, I leave you and the flock of God over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, and rest

Your brother and fellow-servant
in the work of Christ,
JOHN TOMBES.

From my study at the Temple, in London, May 25th, 1645.

The manuscript referred to in this letter, is in the Antiquarian Library at Worcester.

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Henry Jessey, M. A., was a native of Yorkshire, the son of a clergyman of the Church of England, and early became a student of St. John's College, Cambridge. When twentyone years of age, while at the University, he became a decided christian, and then began to direct his studies with reference to the ministry. In 1627, he received episcopal ordination, and in 1633, became Rector of Aughton, in Yorkshire.

In the course of a year, however, he was removed from his parish, for refusing to practise all the ceremonies enjoined by the Rubric and Canons, and for presuming to remove a crucifix which had been set up there.

In 1635, he visited London, in company with his friend and patron, Sir Matthew Bointon, and being highly esteemed as a preacher, was invited by a congregational church to become their pastor. He accepted their invitation in 1637, and labored among them successfully. It appeared however that from year to year, larger and larger numbers of his church were adopting the sentiments of the Baptists, and joining that denomination. Many of them being persons of note, the subject of baptism engaged his attention. A fresh study of the scriptures and of antiquity, led him to change his views of the *mode;* and he thence proceeded to practise immersion only, although he applied it to infants. The reasons which he assigned to his church for this change, were, 1st, the original meaning of the term rendered baptism; 2d, the examples of baptism in the scriptures; 3d, the spiritual mysteries of which the rite is an emblem, namely, the death and resurrection of Christ, our own death to sin, and rising to newness of life. It was not till 1644, that he became convinced that there was no warrant in the scriptures for applying the rite to infants, and then he was baptized on a profession of his faith, by Rev. Hansard Knollys.

Being well versed in the Greek and Hebrew languages, the Syriac and Chaldee dialects, and a devoted student of the Bible, he meditated a new translation of the Old and New Testaments. By his correspondence.

he engaged Mr. Row, Hebrew Professor at Aberdeen, and other literary men in this undertaking. They advanced far in their design, but the turn given to public affairs both in church and state, by the restoration, defeated all their purposes.

Mr. Jessey was distinguished in his day for his interest in the welfare of the Jews. When intelligence reached England, that those of them who were living at Jerusalem, had been reduced to a state of extreme suffering, he exerted himself in their behalf, and in a short time three hundred pounds sterling were collected and sent to them. In 1650, when the Jews were permitted to return and trade in England as formerly, he wrote a treatise on the Messiah, addressed to them, which was highly commended by a number of the assembly of divines, and was prepared in Hebrew for dispersion amongst the Jews of all nations.

Distinguished for his piety, industry and learning, Mr. Jessey commanded universal esteem. He was for the most part free from persecution, until the restoration, when he was committed to prison for nonconformity, and died there in the triumphs of faith, on the 4th of September, 1663, in the sixtythird year of his age. His life was published in 1671, and from it Crosby has drawn the materials of the ample sketch which we find in his pages.

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Daniel Dyke, was born at Epping, in Essex, in the year 1617. He was the son of a clergyman of the Church of England, was educated at Cambridge, and became rector of Great Haddam, in Hertfordshire.

When Cromwell came to be Lord Protector, Dyke was appointed one of his chaplains in ordinary, and in 1653, when examiners were appointed by government to try such as should be admitted to livings in the established church, he was chosen to be one of them. Not long after he left his rectorship in the established church, he became minister of the Baptist church in Devonshire Square, London, where he labored until his death, in 1688.

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John Gosnold was a minister of the Church of England, and was ejected by the act of uniformity. He united with the Baptists on the ground of their conformity to the Scriptures in the constitution of the church. He thought that he saw in the Bible no more authority for infant baptism, than for the other ceremonies which are sanctioned by tradition and the authority of councils. He became pastor of a church in London, and notwithstanding the change in his sentiments, he continued to be intimate with many men of high standing in the establishment. Dr. Tillotson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, used to attend his week-day lecture. Dr. Calamy says of him, "He was bred in the Charter-house School, and in Pembroke Hall, Cambridge; and was afterwards Chaplain to Lord Grey. He was against *infant baptism*. He was deprived of his liberty of preaching, and forced to hide, though he was always peaceably minded, and never gave any disturbance to the government." He died in the year 1678, in the sixtythird year of his age, and was interred at the burying ground near Bunhillfields, where a tombstone was erected to his memory.

Hansard Knollys was a native of Chalkwell, in Lincolnshire, was well educated at home, and graduated at the University of Cambridge. He became pious while at the University, and after he left it, was master of the free school at Gainsborough. He was ordained by the Bishop of Peterborough, first a deacon, then a presbyter of the church of England, and afterwards received the living of Humberton from the Bishop of Lincoln. He had not possessed it more than three years, before he began to feel scruples of conscience touching the usages of the church, such as the sign of the cross in baptism, the surplice, and the admission of men promiscuously to the Lord's Supper. He thence resigned his living, yet preached in different parishes, with the connivance of the bishop, whose personal feelings toward him seem to have been friendly. He afterwards joined the Baptists, and preached with great success in London. It appears that he was much strengthened in his change of opinion, by finding that inasmuch as while preaching in the establishment his labors were not the means of converting any one, yet "when he set out upon another *foundation*, and experienced more of God's teaching and assistance in the work, he quickly found to his comfort, that from thenceforward he continued to receive many seals of his ministry." He appears to have been a man of fine scholarship, and having been forced to fly to New-England to escape the persecution of the high commission court, is honorably mentioned by Cotton Mather among those "whose names deserve to live in our books for their piety."

Henry Denne was a graduate of the University of Cambridge, received orders from the Bishop of St. David's, in the year 1630, and was settled in the parish of Pynton, in Hertfordshire. At a visitation held in his county in 1661, he was appointed to preach the sermon to the clergy and gentry. With a heart set on the reformation of the church, he exposed the existing abuses with a fearless and powerful eloquence. Much excitement followed that occasion, and it seemed at that time, that Mr. Denne would have been satisfied with the established church, if conformity to the papal ceremonies were not enforced. But when in the change of times, the government avowed the intention to reform religion, Mr. Denne devoted himself more closely to the study of the scriptures, in order to aid in that great work. By this means he became convinced that infant baptism has no warrant in the bible, and following out his conviction, was baptized on a profession of his faith, in 1643, and joined the church which was then under the pastoral care of Rev. Mr. Lamb. He afterwards suffered much, but was faithful unto death. He possessed great force of character, manifested an enlightened and warm attachment to his opinions, and did much to promote them by public discussion. His writings breathe a christian spirit, and do honor both to his intellect and his heart.

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William Collins was copastor of a Baptist church in London, in connexion with Dr. Nehemiah Coxe. After obtaining the esteem of Busby, young Collins travelled in France and Italy, and on returning to his

own country, rejected every offer that was made to induce him to join the establishment, "for it was conscience not humor that made him a dissenter." In his funeral sermon which was printed in London in 1702, it is said, that having set apart a day for fasting and prayer, in order to seek divine direction as to the disposal of himself in the exercise of his ministry, on that very evening he received an invitation to settle as a pastor, from a church which met in that part of London called Petty France. The coincidence made a favorable impression on his mind, and a connexion was formed which continued until his death.

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Carolus Maria De Veil, D. D. was a native of France. He was born of Jewish parents, and educated in the Jewish religion. By the study of the prophecies of the Old Testament, compared with the statements of the Evangelists, he became convinced of the Messiahship of Jesus, and professed himself a christian. The announcement of this so enraged his father, that with a drawn sword he attempted to kill him, but was prevented by some who were present. De Veil joined the Roman Catholics, was celebrated among them as a preacher, and was made Doctor of Divinity in the University of Anjou.

In 1672, he published his Commentary on the Gospels, and from the learning he there exhibited, he was appointed to aid in writing against the Huguenots, the chief opponents of the Romish Church in France. Being thus led to study the Protestant controversy, he was convinced of his error and became a Protest-

ant himself. Threatened with persecution, he fled to Holland, and thence crossed to England, where he became intimate with the most eminent men of the church of England, such as Stillingfleet, Tillotson, and Compton, Bishop of London.

In 1678, he published a new edition of his Commentary, and corrected the popish errors with which it abounded. Being urged to prosecute his literary labors, the Bishop of London gave him free access to his library. There he met with some writings of the English Baptists, and was struck with the fact that they so clearly developed the true *Protestant* principles. In the Bishop's family there was a young woman who was much ridiculed by the other domestics for being a Baptist. By means of her, however, he obtained an interview with Rev. Hansard Knollys, at the house of a nobleman near at hand, where Mr. Knollys used to visit. Afterwards he became acquainted with Gosnold, and united with the Baptists under his ministry. It is said that on this account he lost most of his former employments, and most of his old friends, except Dr. Tillotson, who was distinguished for a noble magnanimity of mind, which led him to esteem the merits of other men, however much they differed in opinion from himself.

De Veil was held in high esteem among the Protestants in France. A very friendly letter from Claude was prefixed to his Commentary on the Acts, which was published in 1685. We do not hear of his being settled over any church after he united with the Baptists, but that they, "in consideration of his abilities,

on his dismission from his place, raised him a salary which he enjoyed till his death."*

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William Dell, M. A., was educated at the University of Cambridge, and was a clergyman of the church of England, officiating in the parish of Yeldon, in Bedfordshire. Nothing is known of his holding any connexion with the Baptists, until the civil wars, when the subject of reforming the church became agitated. To that question he brought all the energy of his intellect, and all the warmth of his heart. Deriving from his Bible clear views of the spirituality of the present dispensation, he announced the sentiment, that "to make the whole kingdom a church was a mystery of iniquity." It is said by Dr. Calamy, that Baxter's most frequent disputes with Dell, was about *liberty of conscience*, "that is, that the magistrate had nothing to do in matters of religion by constraint or restraint, but every man might not only hold and believe, but preach and do in matters of religion what he pleased."

In the year 1645, Mr. Dell became chaplain in the army, and preached regularly at the head-quarters of Sir Thomas Fairfax. He was intimate with Oliver Cromwell, and the leading men of those times. In 1646, he was appointed to preach before the House of Commons on a public fast-day. In the course of his sermon he took occasion to speak of the evil of persecution, and of using external force in promoting religion. The preacher who followed him, animad-

* Crosby 4: p. 259.

verted on that part of Mr. Dell's discourse, and defended the right of the magistrate to interfere in matters of conscience. This led to public discussion by means of the press, and thus Mr. Dell stood forth as a leader of the party who favored religious liberty, and Mr. Love, his opponent, a Presbyterian, was at the head of those who advocated persecution.

In 1649, Mr. Dell was appointed master of Caius College, Cambridge, and retained his station until he was ejected by the act of uniformity.

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Vavasor Powell was a native of Radnorshire, in South Wales, where his name has been well known for nearly two centuries, and not only there, but throughout the whole Principality, has been remembered with sentiments of reverence and affection. He was born in 1617, was educated at Jesus College, in Oxford, and went into orders in the established church, about the year 1640. In his youth he was of a gay and impetuous turn of mind, yet, while at Oxford, made great proficiency in the knowledge of languages, and in various branches of literature.

A considerable time elapsed after he became a clergyman, before he knew any thing of experimental religion. In his early days he had been much addicted to a profanation of the Sabbath, and an instance of this kind was made the occasion of arousing his attention and converting him to God. "Being one Lord's day, a stander-by, and beholder of those that broke the Sabbath by divers games, and being there himself, in his clerical dress, or as he calls it, in the *habit of a*

foolish shepherd, he was ashamed to play with them, yet took as much pleasure therein as if he had; a certain Puritan in the mean time passing by, and seeing him there, came to him, and very mildly asked him, "Doth it become you, sir, that are a scholar, and one that teacheth others, to break the Lord's Sabbath thus?" To which he answered, like the scoffers in Malachi, "Wherein do I break it? you see me only stand by; I do not play at all." "But," replied he, "you find your own pleasure herein, by looking on, and this God forbids in his holy word." So he opened his Bible and read these words, in Isaiah, 58 : 13, particularly that expression, "*Not finding thy own pleasure upon the Sabbath day.*" Such was the pertinency of the passage, and the power that came with the word, that he was quite silenced and so far convicted, as to resolve never to transgress in this way again.

From this small beginning, a thorough change of mind and character soon ensued, to which the ministry of the pious and zealous Walter Cradock and other puritans, who were beginning to break out in Wales, greatly contributed. He soon became established in knowledge, and began to preach among his countrymen in the character of an itinerant evangelist.*

After this era of his life, Mr. Powell became an intrepid champion of the Cross, and his history is full of adventure. He suffered much from persecution, which waxed hotter in proportion to his increase of popularity

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* Cambro—British Biography, by Rev. William Richards, LL. D., p. 143. London, 1820.

as a preacher. On that account, in 1642, he left Wales, and went to London.

The intrepidity of his character may be judged of in some degree from the fact, that while residing at Dantford, in Kent, the plague broke out in the town. Many houses were shut up, and the dead bodies were carried out by his chamber wall and window, yet did he not suspend his labors, but preached constantly three times a week; and though some that had the sickness upon them came to hear, both he and his family escaped the contagion.

Vavasor Powell was at one time a warm friend of Cromwell, on account of his love of religious liberty; but when Cromwell seized the protectorate, Powell openly denounced him as an usurper, and earnestly remonstrated against it with the men in power. Nevertheless, he was the first of the nonconformist ministers who suffered under the reign of Charles II. Even before the arrival of the king, the agents of the government had marked him for their prey. The most relentless persecution was then carried on in Wales, without respect to age or sex. Mr. Powell was cruelly treated, and at last died in prison, in October, 1670, in the 53d year of his age, and the 11th of his imprisonment.

Dr. Richards says, "he bore his last illness with great patience, and would bless God and say he 'would not entertain one hard thought of God for all the world,' and could scarcely be restrained at the very height of the disorder from acts of devotion, and from expressing his sentiments of zeal and piety." His remains were deposited in Bunhill Fields, in the pres-

ence of an innumerable crowd of dissenters, who attended him to his grave. The inscription on his tomb, drawn up, as Wood says, by his dear friend Edward Bagsham, describes him as "A successful teacher of the past, a sincere witness of the present, and an useful example of the future age; who in the defection of many, found mercy to be faithful; for which being called to many prisons, he was there tried, and would not accept deliverance, expecting a better resurrection." Dr. Toulmin observes that Dr. Grey, after Wood, has vilified Mr. Powell, by retailing the falsehoods of a piece entitled *Strena Vavasoriensis.* Mark Noble is also to be classed among the vilifiers of this good man, without regarding the pieces written in his defence. Noble represents him as a fool, a poor infatuated wretch, a wild enthusiast, a seditious person, fifth-monarchy man, and one who perhaps aspired to be prime minister to King Jesus, &c. But there is no truth in all this, at least not in the sense in which this violent writer would have it understood. Men of his complexion will always despise, revile and persecute such men as Vavasor Powell. Neal, indeed, followed by Palmer, calls him a fifth-monarchy man; but if he was so, it is certain he was not of the same sort with Venner and his violent adherents, but rather more in the way of thinking of such men as Sherwin, and Bishop Newton. Dr. Toulmin says, "that Mr. Powell's sentiments were those of a Sabbatarian Baptist," which is a very great and unaccountable mistake. Any one who consults the history of his life with any degree of attention, may easily see that he was decidedly a First-day Baptist. In the 119th page of that

book, we are plainly told that "he was a very strict and conscientious observer of the Sabbath day," viz. the first day of the week, the Christian Sabbath, "not doing or speaking, on that day, what he saw lawful upon other days; attending the duties thereof, from evening to evening," &c. With the above assertion of Dr. Toulmin, we may venture to class that notable declaration of Messrs. Neal and Palmer, that Mr. Powell was driven from Wales, for want of Presbyterial ordination. Driven from Wales indeed he was, not for want of a Presbyterial ordination, but rather for want of high church malignity and intolerance; or, in other words, for quitting the ruling, or Laudean faction, and joining the Puritans, and preaching as he did about the country. So active and laborious was he in the duties of the ministry, says Dr. Toulmin, that he frequently preached at two or three places in a day, and was seldom two days in the week throughout the year out of the pulpit! He would sometimes ride a hundred miles in the week, and preach in every place where he could gain admittance, either by night or by day. He would often alight from his horse, and set on it any aged person whom he met with on the road on foot, and walk by the side for miles together. He was exceedingly hospitable and generous, and would not only entertain and lodge, but clothe the poor and aged. He was a man of great humility, very conscientious and exemplary in all relative duties, and very punctual to his word. He was a scholar, and his general deportment was that of a gentleman. In 1642, when he left Wales, there were not above one or two gathered churches; but before the

Restoration there were above twenty distinct societies, consisting of from two to five hundred members, chiefly planted and formed by his care and industry, in the principles of the Baptists."

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Thomas De Laune, was a native of Ireland, the son of Roman Catholic parents. He received his education in his own country, under the patronage of the gentleman who owned the estate on which his parents lived. He was converted when a young man, and afterwards became a teacher of a grammar school in London, and the minister of a Baptist church. Dr. Calamy, one of the Chaplains to Charles II, having invited the non-conformists to bring forth their strong reasons that they might be fairly discussed, Mr. De Laune published his immortal "plea," the best work in defence of non-conformity that was ever written. It passed through twenty editions, and Defoe, who wrote a preface to the eighth edition, says "the work is perfect of itself; never author left behind him a more finished piece; and I believe the dispute is entirely ended. If any man ask what we can say why the Dissenters differ from the church of England, and what they can plead for it, I can recommend no better reply than this; let them answer in short Thomas De Laune, and desire the querist to read the book." Great as were the merits of his work, it was the occasion of his being cast into Newgate prison, where he languished and died. As Defoe observes, "few clearer heads, greater scholars or masters of argument, ever graced the English nation."

In relation to JOHN BUNYAN, whose name is mentioned in connexion with that of De Laune, it would be superfluous to say one word here, for the purpose of giving information respecting his life or character. But in view of a passage which occurs in Southey's Life of Bunyan, I cannot forbear observing in this place, how faint a glimpse the poet laureate seems to have had of the truth, that religious liberty is an element of the *religious faith* of the Baptists. Southey defends the prelates of Bunyan's day, against the charge of high-handed oppression in committing him to prison for preaching the gospel. He thinks that Bunyan should not have persisted in preaching with the spirit of a martyr, but should have considered, "that he was neither called upon to renounce any thing that he did believe, nor to profess any thing that he did not believe; that the congregation to which he belonged, held, at that time, their meetings unmolested; that he might have worshipped when he pleased, where he pleased, and how he pleased; that he was only required not to go about the country holding conventicles; and that the cause for that interdiction was, not that persons were admonished in such conventicles to labor for salvation, but that they were exhorted there to regard with abhorrence that Protestant Church which is *essentially* part of the constitution of this kingdom, from the doctrines of which church, except in the point of infant baptism, he did not differ a hair's breadth. This I am bound to observe," he says, "because Bunyan has been, and no doubt will continue to be, most wrongfully represented as having been the victim of intolerant laws, and prelatical oppression."

It would seem, to say the least, that Dr. Southey could not have seen all the points of the case when he penned this paragraph, since it is so evident that Bunyan considered the mere fact that a Protestant church should be essentially a part of the constitution of a kingdom, as a flagrant violation of the constitutional laws of christianity. He felt his own religious liberty—his liberty of preaching the gospel to be invaded, and he meant to maintain it, even unto death. At the same time, he meant to say nothing which should tend to disturb the public peace, or alienate men's hearts from the civil government. Southey's own account of Bunyan's interview with the Clerk of the Peace, shows this. After he had lain several months in prison, the clerk visited him, to persuade him to obedience. "But Bunyan insisted that the law, being intended against those who designed to do evil in their meetings, did not apply to him. He was told that he might exhort his neighbors in private discourse, if he did not call together an assembly of people; this he might do, and do much good thereby, without breaking the law. But, said Bunyan, if I may do good to one, why not to two? and if to two, why not to four, and so to eight, and so on? Aye, said the Clerk, and to a hundred, I warrant you! Yes, Bunyan answered, I think I should not be forbidden to do as much good as I can. They then began to discuss the question whether under pretence of doing good, harm might not be done, by seducing the people, and Bunyan allowed that there might be many who designed the destruction of the government: let them, he said, be punished, and let him be punished also should he do any thing not becoming a

man and a Christian; if error or heresy could be proved upon him, he would disown it, even in the market place; but to the truth, he would stand to the last drop of his blood. Bound in conscience he held himself, to obey all righteous laws, whether there were a king or not; and if he offended against them, patiently to bear the penalty. And to cut off all occasion of suspicion as touching the harmlessness of his doctrines, he would willingly give any one the notes of all his sermons, for he sincerely deeired to live in peace and to submit to the present authority. "But there are two ways of obeying," he observed; "the one to do that which I in my conscience do believe that I am bound to do, *actively*; and where I cannot obey actively, there I am willing to lie down, and to *suffer* what they shall do unto me." And here the interview ended, Bunyan thanking him for his "civil and meek discoursing," and breathing a wish that they might meet in Heaven."

Note C.—Page 62.

The following are Tyndal's words contained in the book referred to, and extracted by Ivimey. After reprobating severely the conduct of the Romish clergy for using a Latin form of words, he says, "The washynge without the word helpeth not; but thorow the word it purifyeth and clenseth us, as thou readest, Eph. 5. How Christe clenseth the congregation in the founteine of water thorow the word: the word is the promise which God hath made. Now as a preacher

in preaching the word of God saveth the hearers that beleve, so doeth the wasshinge in that it preacheth and representeth to us the promise that God hath made unto us in Christe, the wasshinge preacheth unto us that we are clensed wyth Christe's bloude shedynge which was an offering and a satisfaction for the synne of al that repent and beleve, *consentynge and submytyne themselves unto the wyl of God. The plungyne into the water sygnyfyeth that we die and are burid with Chryste* as cōserning ye old life of synne which is Adā. And the pulling out agayn sygnyfyeth that we ryse again with Christe in a new lyfe ful of the holye gooste which shal teach us, and gyde us, and work the wyll of God in us; as thou seest Rom. 6."

Note D.—Page 65.

Professor Sears, of Newton Theological Institution, having once mentioned to the author in conversation, some remarks which he had heard from Dr. Neander, touching the case of Melancthon, in accordance with what is stated of him on page 65, in answer to a letter of inquiry for my own private information on that point, incidentally suggests the following additional facts. Planck, in his celebrated history of the Protestant Theology, in speaking of the divine manifestations to which some of the anabaptists laid claim, says, "though their revelations were not real, yet with such an honest enquirer after truth as Melancthon, it did not follow that all their doctrines were false. The former

he could therefore leave to their own fate, and yet not deny that the strength of their reasons in regard to infant baptism, made a strong, and according to his convictions, reasonable impression upon his mind."

"The elector wishing to quell the controversy, dissuaded the Wittenburg theologians from discussing the subject of infant baptism, saying he could not see what benefit could arise from it, as the article was not of much importance, and yet the rejection of it would create great excitement, since it had been so long hallowed in the church by the influence of Augustin, its defender. Melancthon said, that he "was agreed with the Elector, that the article of infant baptism was not of much importance, and that it were better not to have any thing to do with it, than that great doubts respecting it be excited." After confessing that the question was one of little importance, it was natural that he should follow the advice of the Elector in regard to his connexion with these men. Whether it were right in him to be so quickly, and as it would seem, so gladly convinced, we leave it for theology to determine."*

Note E.—Page 68.

An analysis of this manifesto, may not be uninteresting to some readers.

I. In the first article, the peasants set forth the benefits of public religious instruction, ask permission to

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*Geshicte des Protestantischen Lehrbegriffs, v. II, p. 47, 50.

elect their own ministers to teach them the word of God without the traditions of men, and that they may have power to dismiss them if their conduct be reprehensible.

II. In the second, they represent that the laws of tithing in the Old Testament, ought not to be enforced under the present dispensation, and pray that they may be excused from all tythes except that of their corn, which they desire might be applied to the support of their teachers, the support of the poor, and the payment of public taxes.

III. In the third, they declare their former state of slavery to be disgraceful to humanity, and inconsistent with the religion of Christ—declare their willingness to submit to the control of magistrates, but not to be *slaves, unless slavery could be proved right from the holy scripture.*

IV. In the fourth, they complain of the injustice of the game laws, which had prevented them from taking birds or wild animals, or even chasing away those which devoured their herbage. They ask that private privileges may yield to public benefit.

V. The fifth complains that a few men claimed all the forests, and that the poor could hardly obtain wood for fuel or repairs. It asks that this matter might be adjusted by the government ; or by the proprietors, if the forests could be proved to be private property.

VI. The sixth set forth the innumerable and ill-timed services, which the lords obliged their tenants to perform, which were increasing every year, and which had become absolutely intolerable. They ask for ad-

justment according to the laws of equity, and of christianity, and the warrant of ancient custom.

VII. The seventh complains of abuses connected with the tenures of their lands, which had been charged with oppressive fines, not embraced in the original grants.

VIII. In the eighth, they speak of the annual rents of their farms having been so much increased, as to exceed the worth of the land. They beg the princes to see that these are so adjusted, that they may gain a livelihood by their labor.

IX. The ninth complains of new laws being daily made, creating new crimes and new penalties, and all this not for the improvement of society, but for pretences to extort money. They ask that justice may not be left to private caprice, but administered according to ancient written forms.

X. The tenth complains that the common lands which had been allowed to the poor for pasturage, had been monopolized by the lords, merely to maintain their horses for luxury and needless wars.

XI. The eleventh declares that the demand of heriots (or fines to be paid to the lord on the death of a tenant,) was the most inhuman of all oppressions. That the affliction of the widow and fatherless children made no impression on the officers, who increased the sufferings of the bereaved, by swallowing up all their property. They required that this custom should be utterly abolished.

XII. In the twelfth they declare that they were willing to retract any demand which could be proved

contrary to the word of God; and that though this memorial contained a list of their present grievances. they did not mean by this to preclude the liberty of making such future remonstrances as might be found necessary.

There is every reason to believe that if these fair and forcible representations had been properly attended to, the peasant war in Germany had never broken out, and the scenes of Munster had never been enacted. But when such appeals were set at naught, what could have been expected of a mighty mass of men driven to desperation? The standard of revolt once lifted up, drew all orders of enthusiasts around it, and when fanaticism once gained the ascendancy, there was no human voice that could "still the voice of the waves and the tumults of the people."

Note F.—Page 73.

The words of De Potter, relating to the views of the Vaudois, concerning baptism, are here given: "Ils attaquerent les sacremens, reprouvant toutes les ceremonies du baptême, hormis la seule ablution: encore eurent-ils soin que cet acte de regeneration au christianisme, ne fût pas jamais confere á des enfans en bas âge; et c'est pourquoi ils rebaptisaient de nouveau toutes les personnes qui abandonnant l' église Romaine demandaient á embrasser leur doctrine."

Note G.—Page 89.

The decisive manner in which the Greek Church expresses the sentiment that the Romish Church has *annihilated* baptism, may be seen by the following extract from a work of Alexander de Stourdza, a writer of the Greek Church. It was published at Studgart in 1816. Speaking of baptism, he says, "The Western church has done violence both to the word and the idea, in practising *baptism* by *aspersion*, the very enunciation of which is a ludicrous *contradiction*. In truth the word *baptizo* has but one signification. It signifies literally and perpetually to immerse. Baptism and immersion are identical; and to say baptism by aspersion, is the same as to say immersion by aspersion, or any other contradiction in terms. Who, then, perceiving this, can hesitate to render homage to the sage fidelity of our church, always attached to the doctrine and ritual of primitive christianity."

During the spring of the present year, while travelling in Greece, the author was struck with the fact that it is impossible for a Greek to associate any idea with the term baptism, except that of immersion. At Kalaimachi, a village on the Gulf of Athens, I was introduced to a learned Greek who spoke various languages. We conversed respecting my country and his own. Among other subjects of inquiry, I spoke of the Greek church, and took occasion to say to him, the Italian church does not practice baptism as you do. As if to correct my inadvertent phraseology, he immediately rejoined, "Baptism! oh no! no—they have *rantism*, (sprinkling); we have *baptism*."

Note H.—Page 90.

The doctrine that a series of ordinations transmitted in a visible succession from the apostles, is necessary to constitute a valid ministry in the church, if *strictly followed out to its legitimate conclusion*, would lead any one of us, either to become a seeker, and wait for a new apostleship, or else to unite with the church of Rome. While Roger Williams, acting on this principle, came to the one conclusion, we have known those who were led by it to the other. The sentiment we have here stated, was in effect most strongly asserted by the Archbishop of York, in the British Parliament, during the debates of the year 1558. The bill before the House, was for attaching the supremacy of the church to the Queen of England. The archbishop said, that if the church of England withdraw from the church of Rome, she would by that act directly forsake and fly from all general councils; and he proceeded to prove that the first four councils of Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon, had acknowledged the supremacy of Rome.* He then presented to their view this alternative for consideration. Either the church of Rome is a true or false one. If she be a true church, then we will be guilty of schism in leaving her, will be excommunicated by her, and the church of England will become herself a false church. If the church of Rome be a false church, then she cannot be a pure source of apostolical succession; and the church of

* Hansard's Parliamentary History, Eliz. 1558.

England must be false, because she derived her ordination and sacraments from that of Rome.

The question we know was decided in favor of separation from Rome; but the speech of the Archbishop presents to the successionist, the horns of a dilemma, between which it would seem difficult to choose.

We have said that the principle of lineal descent from the Apostles would lead one directly to the Church of Rome, because we suppose that if the line of succession can be traced to any one of the Apostles, it can be traced to Peter. Yet, who can bring forth the register to show an unbroken chain of ordinations from him? In the days of Ezra, those who would be acknowledged as priests, were required to prove their right by the genealogical *register*.* On the principle of Apostolic succession, we may make the same requisition now. And in answering such a demand for historical proof, we hear Bishop Stillingfleet saying, "We find bishops discontinued for a long time in the greatest churches. Where was the Church of Rome, when from the martyrdom of Flabia and the banishment of Lucius, the church was governed by the clergy?"†

The learned Cardinal Bellarmine says, "For above eighty years, the church, for want of a lawful Pope, had no other Head than what was in heaven."

That celebrated Cardinal and historian Baronius, who had well nigh filled the Papal chair himself, says, "How deformed was the Roman Church, when harlots no less powerful than vile, bore sway at Rome, and at

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* Ezra, II, 62.

† Irenecum, p. 576.

their pleasure changed sees, *appointed Bishops*, and what is horrible to mention, did thrust into Peter's chair, their own gallants, *false Popes!* What kind of Cardinals can we think were chosen by these monsters?*" "Come here," says Stillingfleet, "to Rome, and here the succession is as muddy as the Tiber itself." The Church of England in the Homily for Whit-Sunday, declares that "the Popes and Prelates of Rome, for the most part, are worthily accounted among the number of false prophets and false Christs, which deceived the world for a long while;" and prays that the gospel may be spread abroad, "to the beating down of sin, death, the Pope, the devil, and all the kingdoms of anti-christ." Various historical chasms might be pointed out, but we have only room to quote these admissions of successionists themselves, which are weighty on account of the source from which they come.

Godwin, in his history of the bishops, has shown that among the English Bishops, many links are wanting which cannot be supplied. He has shown, too, at what enormous prices the English Bishops bought their ordinations, in the eleventh century, when simony prevailed in Italy and England. They committed a crime in view of which Peter pronounced Simon Magus to be in the gall of bitterness, and to have no part or lot in the kingdom of Christ. Then there are decrees of councils, pronouncing *null and void* all those ordinances, wherein any simonaical contract existed. The

* Baronius, Tom. X, and Rights of the Christian Church, quoted in Eclectic Review, vol. V, p. 382, 384.

facts which the providence of God has developed, indicate that it is not his design that his church should be made *dependent* for her ministry, on an outward and visible succession. Was not this plainly shown, when between Leo IV, and Benedict III, a wicked *woman* filled *St. Peter's* chair?

Note I.—Page 102.

The four brothers whom we have referred to, as grandsons of the Rev. James Brown, deserve to be held in lasting remembrance, as illustrations of the truth, that "the generation of the upright shall be blessed," and as bright examples of those virtues which make increasing wealth a blessing to the individual, and to society. The man of business or of fortune, who identifies his happiness with the public welfare, and devotes his wealth to the promotion of christianity, multiplies his own sources of enjoyment, and at the same time becomes a benefactor to his race. In this country, especially, where a mercantile spirit is so widely spread, we should hold those in honor, whose lives convey just lessons concerning the true use of money. With great propriety, this may be said to have been done by these four gentlemen, of whom we speak: John, Joseph, Nicholas, and Moses Brown.

John Brown, Esq. was a liberal promoter of religion and literature in the town of Providence. He was warmly attached to the interests of the Baptist Society,

and laid the foundation stone of the College, in 1769. He was distinguished by untiring industry, and by a sound practical judgment, so that although he was engaged in many enterprises, he seems to have succeeded in all that he undertook. He doubtless possessed much of a public spirit, which he evinced in his efforts for the improvement of the town. In his day, Main-street was a sandy and disagreeable walk; he first caused it to be paved, and although at that time he had twenty sail of ships abroad upon the sea, he might be seen busily engaged in the work himself, in order to be sure that it was properly done. In view of his great success as a merchant, it is gratifying to be able to say of him, that "his liberality kept pace with his riches."

Joseph Brown, LL. D., was long an active member of this church, and though engaged in mercantile business, was distinguished as a lover of science, and especially for his attainments in natural philosophy. For this, his genius particularly disposed him, yet he seems to have been equally at home within the realm of taste. This temple, which he planned, is a proof to us, that he must have been devoted to, at least, one of the fine arts, for no one could have succeeded in producing a structure of such nice and fair proportions, without having given much attention to the study of architecture. He was a warm friend of the college, in which he held the office of Professor of Experimental Philosophy. As a citizen he was peculiarly useful, for such was his knowledge of philosophical mechanics, combined as it was with good taste, that he was consulted

about almost every thing which pertained to improvement in the arts. He died in December, 1785. Mrs. Ward, of Providence, and Mrs. Rogers, youngest daughter of Dr. Gano, are all who remain of his posterity.

Nicholas Brown, Esq. was educated to business from his early youth, and was as distinguished for the exhibition of all the social and mercantile virtues, as he was for his success in commerce. Though "diligent in business," his mind and heart were too enlarged to be engrossed by that alone; he cherished a lively interest in the welfare of his country, the progress of learning and religion. "He was an early, persevering and zealous patron of the college, and a most exemplary member of the Baptist Society. The language of his conduct was like that of the patriarch of old, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." His religious zeal was the effect of a rational conviction of the great truths of the christian revelation; truths which had been his study for many years, and in which his knowledge was deep and extensive. His awful reverence for the Deity impresssed every one who heard him speak, or saw him write the sacred name of the Great Creator and Governor of the world. It was his custom, and he often desired others, to write it in capitals."

"He was from sentiment a lover of all mankind, especially of good men. He was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, nor of the poorest of his disciples. His manners were plain and sincere. He was a faithful friend and a good companion, and combining with his

excellent social qualities a general knowledge of the world, of books, and of men, his conversation was always pleasing and instructive."

Being generally regarded as a man of piety, and expressing always his religious sentiments with great decision, it seemed remarkable to many that he should have doubted the propriety of his becoming a member of the church. A high sense of the dignity of the christian profession, connected with an humble estimation of himself, seem to have prevented his taking a step to which his principles and his habits would naturally and consistently have led him.

He died on the Sabbath, May 29, 1791, about noon. On the following Tuesday, his remains were borne to the church, where a funeral sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. Stillman. A numerous train of relatives and friends followed him to his grave, in the north burying place, for it was justly said of him, that "as in his life he was universally esteemed, so at his death he was universally lamented." Mr. Brown had followed six children to the tomb, one of whom, Moses Brown, died at the age of 16, just after he had graduated at the College, and had awakened the warmest hopes respecting his future character and life. We are happy to say at this day, that two children yet survive him, Hon. Nicholas Brown, and Mrs. Hope Ives, widow of Thomas P. Ives, Esq.

The last of this excellent fraternity of whom we have spoken, was Moses Brown, who lived to the extraordinary age of 97 years, and died on the 6th day of September, 1836. Venerable for his age, but still

more so for his intelligence, integrity, and piety, he long remained among us, the representative of a generation that had passed away. From first to last he exhibited a character formed on the principles of a religion which was his guide in life, and his support in death.

At the age of thirtyfive, Mr. Moses Brown joined the Society of Friends. In doing this, he doubtless followed his convictions of duty. He ever manifested as became him, an interest in religious institutions, and liberally supported those of the sect to which he belonged. He was a founder and patron of the Yearly Meeting Boarding School in this city, was its Treasurer about fiftythree successive years, and manifested a deep interest in the moral and religious improvement of the pupils.

Like those of his family of whom we have already spoken, Mr. Brown ever cherished a generous interest in the welfare of the community, the commonwealth and the country. Though his disposition and his principles led him to keep aloof from party strife, he never failed to exercise the rights of suffrage whenever he saw any important principle to be involved in the issue. He was engaged with his brothers in active business only about ten years, and as early as 1773 he withdrew from the bustle and stir of trade, to that retirement in this vicinity, which his natural turn of mind qualified him to enjoy. There, living in a style of great simplicity, and maintaining habits of regularity and temperance, he passed through a serene and vigorous old age. His intellect was never impaired, his cheerfulness was habitual, and he maintained until his death a lively

interest in all that was passing around him. A friend of education, of peace, of universal emancipation, and of the spread of the bible, his head, and heart, and purse were devoted to the promotion of these objects.

Note J.—Page 110.

When we consider that this house was built while Rhode-Island was yet a colony, we cannot sufficiently admire the enlarged and liberal spirit of the men of those times. In addition to what is said in the discourse, it may be well to mention here, that the lot on which the church stands, bounded as it is by four streets, and enclosed with a picket fence, is 150 feet long on Main street, westward, toward which the house fronts. The floor of the building is laid 80 feet square. It formerly contained 126 square pews, but in 1832 these were taken away and 144 slips were substituted. There are large galleries on the south and north. Formerly there were two galleries on the west; in 1832 the upper one was taken down, to make room for a large organ, a donation from Hon. Nicholas Brown. It is of American manufacture,* and cost $4000. The clock with which the house is furnished, and which cost $125, was presented also by Mr. Brown; and the chandelier which contains 24 lamps, and cost $500, was presented by his sister, Mrs. Hope Ives. The roof and galleries are supported by 10 fluted pillars, of the Doric order. The spire at the west end, is 200 feet in height, and is

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* Made by the Messrs. Hook, of Boston.

one of the most beautiful models in the country. It was at first furnished with a bell, made in London, weighing 2515 pounds, and upon it was the following motto:—

"For freedom of conscience the town was first planted,
Persuasion, not force, was used by the people;
This church is the eldest and has not recanted,
Enjoying and granting bell, temple and steeple."

This last specification was doubtless made with peculiar emphasis, since in England dissenters have ever been forbidden the use of bell or spire.

That bell was split by ringing in the year 1787, and was afterwards recast at Hope Furnace. The weight of it is 2337 pounds, and the inscription on it is, "This Church was formed A. D. 1639, the first in the State, and the eldest of the Baptists in America."

In June, 1837, a committee was appointed, consisting of Messrs. Pardon Miller, Truman Beckwith, Richard Smith, Asa Pearce, and Amasa Mason, to carry into effect the reconstruction of the Vestry. It was formed anew and made more spacious. It is now 76 feet long and 46 wide, and will conveniently seat 600 people. In this change, particular regard was had to the accommodation of the Sabbath School, which meets there on Sunday mornings, and embraces 440 scholars, and 52 teachers. Mr. Richard Eddy is the Superintendent. Several Bible Classes meet with the Sabbath School. A lecture is held in the vestry on Wednesday evenings. The meetings of the Church are also held there. The Church at this time embraces 561 members, and has five deacons, viz. John Hill,

John Dexter, Nathaniel Bump, Varnum J. Bates, and Henry P. Yeomans.

In 1838, a baptistery was added, built on such a plan that when it is used, all the congregation can witness the holy rite to which it is consecrated. Formerly the church resorted to the river on baptismal occasions; but the growth of the city has of late years made that inconvenient. When we remember that spacious baptisteries are among the *oldest* relics of christian antiquity in Europe, we have reason to believe, that the extensive revival of the primitive baptism would give rise to the building of large and convenient baptisteries in all our cities. Many centuries ago, in Pisa, Florence, Rome, and other cities, there was one great baptistery to which all the churches resorted. At Nocera de Pagani, near Naples, there is one which dates its origin back to the third century. These, though forsaken now, or visited only as objects of curiosity, stand there as witnessess of the past, and the testimony which they bear, awakens in our hearts the hope that the simplicity of ancient times will be restored. Ere the lapse of another century, we trust that such means of honoring God's ordinance, will have become common in this country.

It is but a just tribute which we owe to the memory of a departed friend, to acknowledge our obligations to the Rev. John Stanford, D. D., for the interest which he manifested in the history and welfare of this church, and the care which he took in arranging our earliest

records. He came to Providence in the autumn of 1787, and supplied the pulpit of this church for one year. The following notice of the invitation which was presented to him, to accept the pastoral care of the church, is copied from the church record, under date of December 31, 1787. "This afternoon, the principal part of the male members of the church and society, attended to the call of Mr. John Stanford, Minister, now of New-York, but sometime of England, to take the pastoral charge of this church and society, for the term of one year." In the evening of the same day, the joint committee of the church and society met at the house of Nicholas Brown, Esq. to report the above call of Mr. Stanford. Mr. Stanford being affected with the unanimity of the church and congregation, declared he had no desire or inclination to take the charge of any church, but would duly attend to their invitation and return an answer by an appointed messenger.

1788, January 1. "Mr. John Jones waited on Mr. John Stanford to receive his answer to the Church's invitation." In his reply, Mr. Stanford said, that he would be willing to supply the church temporarily, but without any expectation of a settlement as Pastor, and that he "would attempt to adjust the scattered affairs of the church, that the people may be better able to settle finally with any other minister whom they might choose." Having fulfilled his design, he returned to New-York, and labored there many years, as Chaplain to the humane and criminal institutions of that city. He died January 14, 1834, in the 80th year of his age. An interesting memoir of him, has been written by Rev. Charles G. Sommers.

The following inscription was copied from President Manning's Tomb Stone, April, 1830.

IN MEMORY OF

THE REV. JAMES MANNING, D. D.

PRESIDENT

OF RHODE-ISLAND COLLEGE.

He was born in New-Jersey, A. D. 1738,
Became a member of a Baptist Church, A. D. 1758,
Graduated at Nassau Hall, A. D. 1762,
Was ordained a Minister of the Gospel, A. D. 1763,
Obtained a Charter for the College, A. D. 1665,
Was elected President of it the same year,
And was a member of Congress, A. D. 1786.
His person was graceful,
And his countenance remarkably expressive
Of sensibility, cheerfulness and dignity.
The Variety and Excellence of his Natural Abilities,
Improved by Education and enriched by Science,
Raised him to a rank of Eminence among Literary Characters.
His Manners were engaging, his Voice harmonious,
His Eloquence natural and powerful.
His Social Virtues, Classic Learning, Eminent Patriotism,
Shining Talents for instructing and governing Youth,
And Zeal in the Cause of CHRISTIANITY,
Are recorded on the Tables of many Hearts.
He died of an Apoplexy, July 29, 1791,
Ætat 53.
The Trustees and Fellows of the College have erected this Monument.
1793.

At a quarterly meeting of the Charitable Baptist Society, held in the Committee Room of the First Baptist Meeting-House, on Monday evening, December 9th, A. D. 1839, being the second Monday of December, Hon. NICHOLAS BROWN, Moderator,

It was voted, That the Clerk of this Society be requested to enclose and seal a copy of the Rev. Mr. Hague's Centennial Discourse, together with such other documents as the Centennial Committee may direct, and place the same with a suitable inscription in the archives of the Society, to be opened in the year 1939.

A true copy from the records of said Society.

Attest,

GAMALIEL LYMAN DWIGHT,

Clerk of the Charitable Baptist Society.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In order to guard against any mistake as to the date of the formation of this Church, it may be well to state, that the proper time for the celebration of the Centennial Anniversary occurred in March; but by a vote of the Church its observance was deferred on account of the absence of the Pastor, who was then in Europe.

ERRATUM.—Of the two or three misprints which may be found in this work, it is not necessary to direct the reader's attention to any except one on page 24—for *district*, read *distinct*.

Date Due

FACULTY			
FACULTY			